

Wimpey Norbury

Music & Letters

A Quarterly Publication

Price Five Shillings

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July, 1925

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THE recent foundation of a National Trust has turned our thoughts more seriously to Opera, and I am anxious to find and to publish one or two good essays on this subject. A friend of **MUSIC AND LETTERS**, who wishes to remain anonymous, has put it in my power to offer a prize of twenty guineas for the best essay on the following thesis :—

A comparative study of indigenous forms of dramatic music and of opera, pointing out in what way they were characteristic of their land of origin and how far they have a bearing on our own problem.

Sir Henry Hadow and Mr. Frederic Austin have kindly consented to assist me in the task of adjudication.

CONDITIONS.

If two essays are adjudged to be of equal merit the prize will be divided: it will be given in any case. The successful essay will be published, and the Editor reserves the right to publish also any other that appears to him to be of value.

The essay must be typewritten and *must not be signed*. The writer's name and address must be enclosed in a sealed envelope bearing an identifying mark and words, which must also appear at the foot of the essay itself. For length, five thousand words are desired, but a shorter or longer essay will be considered. Musical or other illustrations are admissible. An essay in a language other than English must have a translation attached to it.

The essays will be collected by :—

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and they should reach him by Saturday, Sept. 26 at latest. The outer envelope should bear the syllables "Nat. Op." in the left-hand top corner.

TELEGRAM

Music and Letters

JULY, 1925.

VOLUME VI.

NUMBER 3

JEAN DE RESZKE

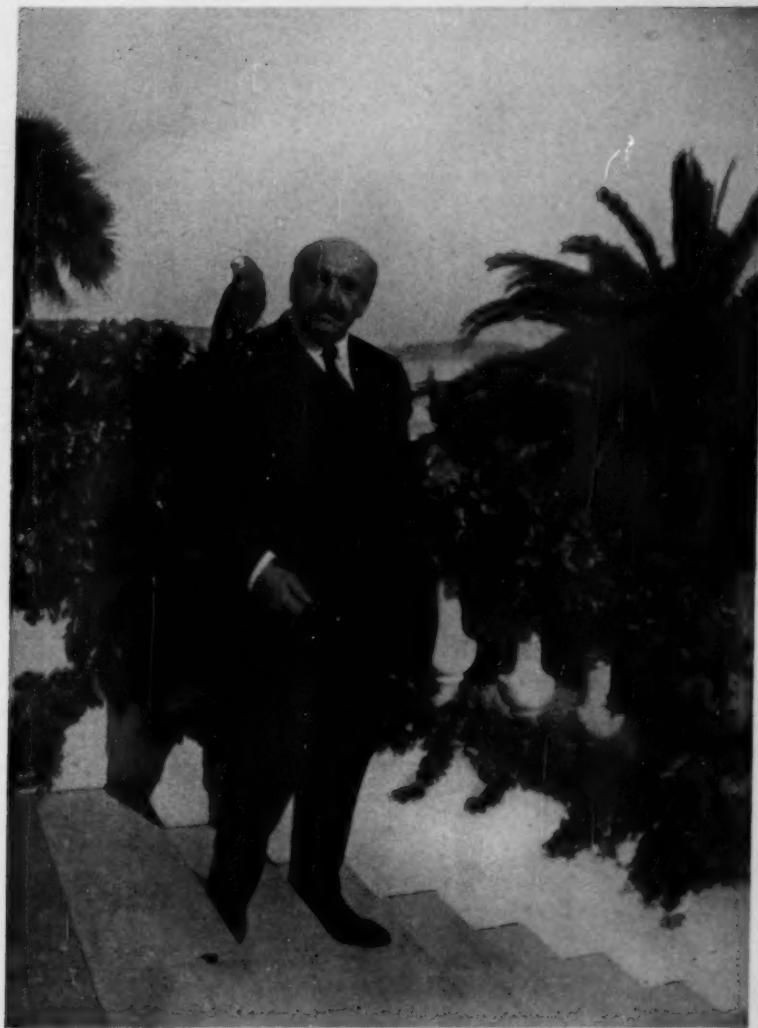
HIS MANNER OF LIFE.

JEAN DE RESZKE was born on the 14th January, 1850, at Warsaw, where his father was a well-known resident. There is no record of his family being musical, but his mother was a good singer, who taught all the children music and singing, and they were accustomed from their earliest days to hear good singing, as most of the singers at the opera visited the house and sang there. As a boy, Jean sang in the church, and in local concerts, and soon made up his mind to choose singing as his profession. His first master was Ciaffei, and then he went to Cotogni for whom he always expressed great admiration and affection. While studying with him he travelled everywhere Cotogni went to sing, to London (where he heard Graziani whom he never forgot) and elsewhere, thus hearing all the great singers of the period. He began as a baritone and made his début in 1874 in Venice in *La Favorita*. He was immediately engaged for Drury Lane next year, where he sang *Don Giovanni*. Several singers had already told him that he was really a tenor, and in the following year, 1876, the crisis came. He was singing Figaro in *Il Barbiere*, in Paris, and his father had come specially from Warsaw to hear him. Jean had a great success, spreading himself especially upon the high notes and taking his cadenzas up to B flat, but a cold douche was administered by his father who told him immediately that he was on the wrong track and advised him to leave the stage for the time being and work at tenor rôles. He began working with Sbriglia at once, but for the most part of the next eight years he travelled about with his brother Edouard and his sister Josephine, who were both on the operatic stage already, continuing his own studies and coaching

them. He had already acquired a passion for teaching and for overcoming technical difficulties for himself and for others. In 1881 they were at Madrid, and Jean sent up a *ballon d'essai* by singing the tenor rôle in *Robert le Diable*. He was not satisfied apparently, for the silence continued unbroken for three more years, when he appeared in Massenet's *Hérodiade* in Paris in 1884, in Victor Maurel's company at the Théâtre des Italiens. This was such a marked success that Massenet immediately engaged him to create the *Cid* in 1885, at the Opera, and this was more than a marked success, it was immediate fame. This was the first time that I heard of Jean, when I read in the newspapers the account of his triumph. He remained in Paris as a member of the opera company until 1888, singing in *Le Prophète* in 1887, and in the *reprise* of Gounod's *Roméo* in 1888. This was to become one of his greatest successes, and it was evident even then that he was unusually suited to the part. At one of the rehearsals the producer interrupted to make some suggestion to Jean, at which Gounod called out from the theatre: "*Laissez le : je ne veux pas qu'on touche à ce garçon.*" Gounod wrote for him for this performance the air "*O jour de deuil.*" No one who heard him sing this can forget the poignant expression of it.

This is in no sense a biography of Jean de Reszke. He left behind some fairly full memoirs up to the year 1885, and it is to be hoped that these may be one day completed. The reader must not be disappointed that these notes will contain few anecdotes and stories about other singers, no jokes and nothing quotable. Those who knew Jean well appreciated to the full his admirably told stories, and his reminiscences of himself and of other singers. They could not be repeated here or anywhere else, but nobody ever heard him tell an ill-natured story about anyone: he could caricature to amuse, but never to wound. What I hoped would be interesting, would be to give an idea of how he worked when he was not actually singing, rather than to write an account of his career, which is a matter of records and history, and in consequence the reader must please to excuse a somewhat personal view.

My first actual acquaintance with him was in 1894. At that time I was in America as solo *répétiteur* with the Damrosch opera company. There were at that time two companies, one the Damrosch, the other the Abbey and Grau, which was considered the "star company." In the Abbey and Grau company Melba, Nordica, Emma Eames, the de Reszkes, Plançon and Maurel were the leading singers. As a rule, this company remained permanently in New York, while Damrosch's company was on tour. It so happened that both companies were on tour this year, and actually overlapped at Boston. I had already worked with Nordica, at Bayreuth, and we resumed operations



JEAN DE RESZKE

FROM A PHOTOGRAPH BY H.R.H. THE PRINCESS VICTORIA

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in Boston, where her hotel rooms adjoined those of the de Reszkes. At this time Jean had only sung *Lohengrin* and *Meistersinger*, and had made up his mind to sing *Tristan* and the *Ring*. He enquired of Nordica who was playing for her, and asked for an introduction. Various delays intervened, but immediately we met he invited me to go to Poland with him that summer, arranging that Edouard and he should meet me on a given date in Vienna. He had not got a house of his own in Poland, so we three lived in a guest-house on his married sister's property at Borowno, between Warsaw and Cracow. The routine was something like this: At seven Jean would be up, watching his yearling horses do their exercise; after breakfast we would begin work, and work intermittently till lunch, not merely *répétition*, but a real technical study of difficulties, singing the same passage in many different ways, until he was satisfied with it. This would go on all the morning. In the afternoon he would work spasmodically most of the time, and play lawn tennis vigorously. After dinner he would rest, and sit somnolent in a chair until about eleven o'clock, then, just as we were hoping to get to bed, he would wake up and say "*Essayons la voix*," and would try over phrases that had worried him from all the operas of his répertoire, and would go on from that to singing, perhaps, most of an opera until two in the morning; but he was up at seven just the same. This power of doing without sleep never left him, and to the last he complained bitterly if any one wanted to go to bed before twelve at least.

He could read at sight well, and had no difficulty in learning the notes, and his memory never failed him. But although he could play the piano well enough to accompany himself in all his rôles for practice, and play for himself if need arose when he was giving lessons, he never learned to read piano music, to associate the notes he saw with his fingers, but always played by ear, and he could play the things he knew in any key without difficulty. I draw a little attention to these facts because it is considered by many people to be rather beneath their dignity to say that they work for a year before singing a rôle, since it might imply that they had difficulty in learning the notes. So many distinguished musicians have inveighed against the singers who can't perform things at sight, that it is worth calling attention to the fact that it is highly undesirable to sing music at sight in public. Some singers learn much quicker than others, but no one can get a thing really "*into his voice*" in the same space of time in which he can learn it. Great singers have their duties towards the public, and can refuse to sing works for which they have not been given time enough to prepare, but the young singers are often forced into this position by their elders who ought to know better. Ability to read at sight and to learn quickly

is excellent if it be used to set free more time to study the heart of the music, and to try every possible technical means to express it; but if it be used in the cause of hasty performances it is an unmitigated curse.

While he was learning *Tristan* he felt the music so acutely that at times he was hardly able to go on singing; but by the time it came to performance he could afford to sing *à froid*, relying on technique only to reproduce the particular effect that he had felt so deeply when studying. Before singing *Siegfried* he worked for a year at it, and heard several performances in Dresden. Every movement was thought out and rehearsed with such care that nothing could be forgotten, and lest any of the thousand details should escape him, I sat in the forge with the score to prompt him when necessary, not as to the music, but as to what piece of action with the forging of the sword came next. But it never was necessary. Moreover, the whole thing, and every phrase of it, had been so worked into his voice that when he sang it it appeared "inevitable," both the note and the colour, and the whole line of the phrase itself; it was largely this that impressed audiences immediately with his mastery and his personality. The effects of hard work could not have been better exemplified. He sang *Tristan*, *Siegfried* and *Gotterdämmerung*, and spent a year working at each one. He would sing the whole part through, or whole acts, with a different method of production, until he was satisfied that he had found the best. In New York Edouard and he used to experiment in the Metropolitan with different productions, one listening from the gallery, to the other on the stage, and would criticise each note separately until the ideal was attained. His diction in French, German and Italian was wonderfully perfect, the result of hard study and continuous practice. M. Bellaigue, the veteran musical critic of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, recently wrote in the *Gaulois* that "the French language had never been pronounced and accented with such accuracy and force, or if need be with such charm and tenderness, as in the mouth of this foreigner." He spoke French in conversation habitually, with a style and vocabulary far more distinguished than most Frenchmen possess. His Italian diction was equally perfect, and he was a complete master of the spoken language. German he did not speak equally well, but sang it with such ease and charm that Mancinelli, the conductor, said to him, "When other people sing German I don't like it, but it sounds beautiful when you do it." It is noticeable that when one recalls Jean's singing, it is never the notes, but always the words which come back. People might go to hear so-and-so's top notes or bottom notes, but with Jean it was the way in which he clothed the words with charm or sorrow, dignity or tenderness, that one will always remember.

English was a language he never sang, in opera, and never used very much, though he spoke it fairly well. However, his lessons in English diction to pupils were invaluable to them, and made them take as much trouble over their own language as they would over a foreign tongue. He had a great gift for imparting pronunciation and accent, and many of his pupils learnt from him to sing perfect French, better than French singers, though their conversational French may have remained Stratford-atte-Bow. In teaching he used French mostly, with those who could speak it at all, varied with a few phrases in English, for the benefit of English and American pupils. To the Russians he spoke in Russian, and to the Germans in German. It must be remembered that in the early days Covent Garden was the Royal Italian opera, and Italian was the only language used. In Augustus Harris's day Jean insisted on singing operas in their original language; this meant a good deal of trouble and expense to the management, because three choruses had to be provided if necessary—French, Italian and German. But it also involved Jean in trouble, for he had to relearn some of his rôles in their original language. He made the same reform at the Metropolitan in New York. He was made in 1901 Chevalier of the Légion d'Honneur, for his services in the cause of popularising French opera in French abroad and thus providing employment for many French singers. In 1922 he was advanced to the grade of Officier.

During the years 1890-1900 there was not much variety in his outward life. The winter was spent in America, and the summer season in London, with the intervening periods resting and learning new rôles in France or in Poland.

In New York his rule of life was very strict, living in a hotel which he rarely, if ever, left except to go to the theatre. He was always liable to take cold and this turned to bronchitis very easily. As his technical power increased he contrived to sing well even when he was suffering from a congestion of the bronchial tubes that gave him the greatest distress. In London it was the summer, and he transgressed his strict rules, would go to stay for week-ends in the country and would bicycle—it was the bicycle period—and there is no doubt that he suffered from his freedom to a certain extent.

The variety of his rôles in New York in one season was amazing. He would sing in one week in *Tristan*, *Manon* and *Aida*, and in another *Siegfried*, *L'Africaine* and *Werther*, each in their original language.

His last season in London was 1900, and his health began to give more anxiety. He had always suffered from bronchial catarrh to a degree which would have made singing impossible for most people.

Changes of temperature and of climate made this worse, and his liability to this trouble increased very much. From 1900 to 1905 he lived in Paris, singing at the Opéra. In 1905 M. Reyer's *Sigurd* was in rehearsal for the opéra, with Jean in the title rôle. Unfortunately he fell ill with bronchitis and was treated with iodine, which acted with him most violently on the bronchial tubes, inflaming them to such a degree that he entirely lost the use of his voice for some time. He went to Poland for a change of air. When he came back he began rehearsals again, but it was too soon, and once more he fell ill. The director was anxious, as if Jean was not going to be able to sing, a contract must be made with a certain other tenor, who was stipulating as part of his terms that Jean was not to be in the company at all. Whether this was exactly true or not is beside the mark, but it showed a new phenomenon. Jean's popularity had been such that no one else competed with him, and he could afford to encourage "free trade" in tenors. Some years previously in New York, a famous Kurwenal had protested because Bispham always sang the part and he was left out: the manager's answer was, "Do you think it makes a dollar's worth of difference which of you sings Kurwenal so long as Jean sings *Tristan*?" More than that, Jean's nature would not have permitted him to make such a stipulation himself, and it made an atmosphere of jealousy and intrigue which was distasteful to him. He had always taken his profession *en grand seigneur*, and he would leave it in the same manner. He therefore simply announced that he was not going to sing again.

His friends were occupied for some time with various projects for his reappearing, for he wisely declined them all and decided to teach—as it was impossible for his activity suddenly to come to an end. Many plans were discussed then, invitations from New York, plans to build a conservatoire and theatre for him in the Champs Elysées (the site of the present theatre), where he could choose his colleagues and train pupils from the beginning and produce complete operas. But in the end he preferred to teach simply and quietly at home in his house in the Rue de la Faisanderie.

He was appointed *Directeur Artistique* at the opéra, but the scheme was foredoomed to failure, as he had no properly defined functions, and consequently if it was desired to escape from taking his advice or from acting upon it when given, there were abundant opportunities so to do. He did, in fact, take some few pupils and coach them in rôles, but the idea was soon abandoned as hopeless.

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wards I met him and expressed some polite hope that he had found his work useful. He replied, "The conductors wouldn't let me do most of the things which Jean de Reszke taught me." So much had Jean had his own way with conductors that he hardly knew what a real autocrat a conductor could be. That was not because he had been a "spoilt child" of the opera, but because he had a natural sense of style and a way of giving shape to musical phrases that any conductor would envy. This was a real natural gift, for in any song, whether familiar or brand-new to him, whether an operatic air or a slight song, nothing that he touched he did not adorn. Also from his habit, which I have described, of long and ample study of a rôle from the point of view of voice-production, he invested his singing with an inevitability with which it seemed folly to tamper.

Certain days were open for auditions, and these brought a great concourse of people. On one occasion, when all the others had been heard, there remained one rather shabbily dressed, looking like a commercial traveller, who asked to be heard. When he had finished singing, Jean said to him that with a voice such as his he could sing anywhere, and offered him introductions to managers and so on, which the queer-looking stranger declined. The mystery was solved soon by a charming letter from the stranger, who was in reality Knoté, of Munich, the well-known tenor, who had disguised himself in order to get a genuine opinion on his voice.

The war interrupted the flow of pupils, but in October, 1915, some arrived, and he taught in Paris till 1916, leaving for Fontainebleau at the urgent request of his son. The loss of this son, his only child, was a blow from which he could never quite recover. He left Paris in October, 1919, for Nice, and by the beginning of 1920 work there was in full swing. Here at last seemed to be the realisation of his dreams, a school of singing where pupils could be prepared for him by his assistants, coached in all the traditions, taught the *mise-en-scène*, and finally could appear at a *Théâtre des Débutants*. But unfortunately these dreams could not be realised all at once. It is tragic that in the realisation of them, their own dreamer and inspirer was to die. In the winter of 1924 the long hoped-for performance of *Don Giovanni* was given by his class, several performances being given at Nice and at Cannes. The extra exertions of attending rehearsals, and the amazing energy and zeal with which he coached and inspired everybody, lessened his powers of resistance to a chill caught at rehearsal, which turned to pneumonia, and after 14 days' illness he died on April 8, 1925.

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proof of the value of his teaching lay in the fact that his voice at 75 was in many ways better than it had been at 45. He had learned all his life, and was still learning. His recurrent bronchitis had always made it difficult for him to be dead sure of his health, but his technique overcame that difficulty: he said himself quite recently that if when he was on the stage he had had the technique he possessed at that moment, he would have sung far better and suffered far less unhappiness.

I remember on one occasion when we went to America a reporter asked him—with characteristic impudence—"Don't you think you are very much overpaid for what you do, Mr. de Reszke?" Jean answered imperturbably, "When I am in good health and everything goes well, I enjoy singing so much that I feel I ought to be paid; but when I feel out of sorts no money on earth could compensate me for the tortures I go through."

If those who professed to find fault with his teaching, or those who said that his voice was failing could have heard him sing in March, 1925, they would have been astonished to hear that his voice was still what it used to be, and more also, all over his range from top C to two octaves below, with every shade of forte and piano, and every expressive device as perfectly under control as ever. Projects were on foot to record his voice for the gramophone, but the idea had been put off until the spring when his teacher's work would be less heavy.

I am not going to attempt an account of his technical principles, but I should like to say that, if anyone has to write about his teaching, Jean himself would have preferred nobody to Mr. Johnstone Douglas, whose article follows. He knew Jean and Edouard from 1907 onwards, and for several years acted as assistant to Jean, preparing the pupils for him, and continuing the instruction which the master gave, as well as accompanying at a large number of lessons. He has had, moreover, the great advantage of returning often, and quite recently, and thus has kept in touch with the Master's ceaseless development and improvement of his own methods.

AMHERST WEBBER.

HIS PRINCIPLES OF SINGING.

It is a difficult matter to write down Jean de Reszke's principles of singing in set order. In the first place he never codified them himself, he regarded with suspicion "singing made easy," and distrusted teachers who professed to hold any single key that would open the many doors of singing. His ideas changed their focus

and perspective very often, and the longer he taught the better he taught. One of his first pupils, May Petersen, came back to him a few years ago, and his first remark to her was: "I hope you will think that I have made some progress." Moreover, the questions of technique were always in his mind, and teaching was not just an occupation for retirement, it was a genuine passion. Old pupils coming back would find new things that had been thought of, new "places" found, new analogies, new metaphor, but always the same Master.

Perhaps the best way of stating his ideas—he himself always rejected the word "method"—would be to put down in order the various steps by which he would take a pupil, more or less a beginner, and to give some of his own expressions and analogies, remembering always that with him imitation played a larger part than explanation. He would say: "I can imitate you (this was very true, he had a peculiar gift of mimicry); why can't you imitate me?" A further difficulty is that with him voice-production, diction and interpretation were inseparable: the very earliest lessons, after vowel sounds pure and simple, would be on phrases from operas in any language, to exemplify the technical point that was being studied.

The object of his whole teaching was primarily the operatic stage, but was by no means confined to that. He said himself of his way of training: "*Au commencement, les petits galops, puis le grand entrainement, et après ça les courses classiques, les Derby.*" He knew that in the theatre one wanted all kinds of resource and colour in the voice, but primarily power, "*Au théâtre il faut gueuler et il faut savoir gueuler,*" and he was out to get more power from voices, both by increasing their size and by the proper use of what size they had got already. He had an uncanny power of building up a voice out of little or nothing, and under his hand ordinary voices were transformed into something rich and strange. But his power was never obtained by the sacrifice of beauty of tone: it was said of him by Reynaldo Hahn: "*Il est le seul ténor qui ait du charme dans la force.*" Nor did he ever encourage his pupils to sing beyond their powers, though he constantly expected them to develop those powers more and more. Singing was to him like any other form of athletics, a question of training and natural gifts combined: the amateur has the natural gifts but the professional must have both. In producing more power he never allowed pupils to strain their voices. He would have preferred that all work should be done under his supervision, a lesson every day but no practice. It is impossible to hear yourself sing, you can only judge by sensation, and it is some time before your analysis of sensations is a sufficient guide. If any damage was done to voices, it was done while they were

practising misguidedly at something they had misunderstood. Those of his pupils who stayed several years, and came back frequently for more lessons, felt the full truth of this, and benefited by his acute diagnosis of the faults into which they had unconsciously fallen.

He also taught by exaggeration—*il faut en avoir trop, pour en avoir assez*—and in each point of his teaching insisted upon the supreme, cardinal importance of that particular point. Not for many lessons did things begin to become relative to each other; they were always absolute. In this way his teaching seemed to contradict itself at times, and the stresses on one side of technique seemed to be too heavy, but to those who had patience and faith the kaleidoscope settled down to a clear picture.

The first step would be to secure the foundation on which everything was to rise, namely, the "support." To get this he would make the pupil sit down in an attitude of complete relaxation, round-shouldered, elbows on knees, hands hanging down ("asseyez-vous comme ça et puis méditez") in order to relax all the muscles of the chest, and prevent the use of any others except those of the diaphragm. Then, in inhaling, the lower ribs were to be expanded without raising the chest:—"Imagine yourself to be a great church bell, where all the sonority is round the rim." But this was not to be confused with sticking the stomach out—abdominal breathing—the abdomen was to be kept up and in, to give greater support to the diaphragm. In singing, this expansion was to be kept as long as possible, and the lower ribs not allowed to collapse in order that the breath might be kept under compression to the very last. This was, in fact, the first step towards the legato style of the true Bel canto. Trouble sometimes arose from beginners becoming frightened at the muscular fatigue this caused, if they had been brought up to think singing should be "easy and natural and effortless." Also, he made one exaggerate this compression to develop the muscles, and produce temporarily a tone which was over-*écrasé*, squashed, or compressed. The tone was to be produced by the vocal cords and the mouth only, with no deliberately added resonance of chest or head. A word such as the French *puis* would be taken, with a much exaggerated *p* and extremely thin *u* and *i*.

Another way of establishing connection between the voice and its support was to breathe out, right from the bottom of the lungs, the pure sound of the Italian "ah" on the breath and not in it, with no head resonance at all, the breath coming straight up from the diaphragm without compression, over the vocal cords and out of the mouth, as if one was breathing out on the hand to warm it. This gives complete relaxation of all the muscles of throat and tongue.

Now all this was unattainable without a low position of the larynx,

and this deep breathing of course materially assisted the descent of the larynx. He insisted upon the lowest possible position of the larynx for all heavy singing as the great protection against over-strain. The vocal cords were to do their work, as if the singer was speaking; one of his demonstrations was how the speaker's voice gradually merges, imperceptibly, into the singing voice. If the cords did not do their work properly, the illusion of speaking whilst singing could not be maintained. The proper functioning of the cords means that they must be kept tense not flabby, hard not unsteady, and with their edges close together, kept straight, not ragged. He often used the phrase: " You should stroke your cords," meaning that you must not attack too violently so as to damage them. The *coup de glotte* was only allowed when working at getting the cords to work properly, and then only under his supervision.

The soft palate and uvula were the factors which chiefly determined the quality of the voice by controlling the passage to the nose. To get that most difficult sound, a clear Italian " a " in the lower part of the voice, up to middle C for men or the octave above for women, the palate must be low. The difficulty here is to keep the larynx low without the palate rising. To obtain more *timbre* in this part of the voice, the palate was drawn back but not raised, and kept rigid. This is important, for if the palate be too high for these notes it produces a heady tone, which booms, and makes it impossible to " speak " on the voice and give the vowels their true sound (a fault particularly common with contraltos). As the pitch rises, above C, so the palate rises too, retaining its back position as in the lower medium, in order to retain the *timbre*, and to prevent the high notes hooting in the head. Those who sing too much in the head, besides producing a dead, colourless tone, have generally a tendency to sing sharp. The education of the palate was arrived at by the following means:—" Draw back the palate till it feels as if it was on the level of your ears, hear the pitch of the note mentally, and then strike as if you were trying to focus your voice on to the two sides of the pharynx at once." An exercise such as



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The tongue must not rest against the lower front teeth, but must be slightly drawn back with the tip curled down against the tongue-string. The back of the tongue had to be absolutely loose. If the tongue is too far forward it tends to bring the soft palate forward with it, and put the voice into the nose. If the tongue is stiff at the back, and the muscles at the base allowed to tighten, the tone immediately sounds throaty, because it becomes then supported in the throat and not from the diaphragm. The chin must be kept still and absolutely loose, the lower jaw hanging from the ears as if dislocated.

Another way of preventing this booming or spreading tone was by "pinching the uvula with the tonsils." This was, above all, useful on *o* and *oo* sounds, but everywhere and especially in the upper part of the voice it gave an added edge to sounds that might otherwise be flabby. Such a phrase would be taken as



where the forward position of the lips, in an oval shape, would be a further help to securing the resonance of the *o* sound. This "pinching" was very difficult to get right, and it ought never to be practised without skilled supervision, as pupils are apt to stiffen the muscles at the root of the tongue in their endeavour to alter the shape of the arch, which requires little or no muscular effort. This practice sometimes resulted in a temporary stiffness in the voice and excessive tightness in the tone, a fault of excess which could be easier remedied than a fault of defect. In all his teaching he demanded, as I have said, exaggeration in order to get enough. If any detail became too prominent it was easy to relax a little there. When things had fallen into their place there remained just enough to give the desired effect, and a reserve of power if more were wanted. An element of great importance was the "mask" tone, to get the maximum resonance and ring in the voice, second only in importance to the support. To obtain this the uvula was held poised (i.e., in not so exaggerated a position as when working at the "education of the palate"), so as to give just room enough for the tone to be thrown up into the resonating spaces behind the nose, using the sound of the French "*-an-*" as in "*souffrance*." If the sound did not strike behind the uvula it would go into the nose and produce a very ugly quality of sound, almost invariably flat. The difficulty was, as he said, that "*Le nez est l'antichambre du masque*," and

many people remained in the ante-chamber thinking they were in the presence. This "mask" tone was of general use, but never in piano singing. A very effective sentence to obtain this resonance was "*Pendant que l'enfant mange son pain, le chien tremble dans le buisson*," monotoned on each successive note of the scale. This mask quality he insisted on as an essential ingredient in women's chest voices, which he would rarely allow to be carried above E above middle C, never above F: if carried above F a "break" inevitably develops. In a course of purely mask singing *o* and *a* would become as French *on* and *an*, the open *é*, as in *être*, became *ain*, and the closed *é* as in *été* was hardly placed in the mask at all, but was supported on the diaphragm. To get the maximum amount of "forward" tone to the voice, which he deemed "essential," it was his plan to imagine that you were drinking in the tone, rather than pushing it out. This idea encouraged the palate to draw back and give *timbre* to the voice, while it helped the tone to find its way into the true mask, whereas an attempt to push the tone out often ends merely in a nasal tone, though when the voice is in the right place the tone seems to be resonating right on the hard palate, by the front teeth. This apparent paradox was often misunderstood by those who criticised his teaching without knowing it.

After a certain amount of work at these different "places," the pupil would be told to sing something, and just sing naturally, allowing all the various elements to fall—more or less—into their places. The great idea was to keep the line from the diaphragm, through the vocal cords into the mask, to control—*maîtriser*—the voice and not allow it to "*faire le steeplechase*" from chest to head, and nose to throat. The whole body was to be as though one was "settling down" on to the diaphragm, relaxed but ready to spring, rather than braced up and stiff as if "on parade." The effort was to come from the back as if the sound was following "a line drawn from the small of the back to the bridge of the nose." This invariably added a velvety quality to the voice, as it had done to his own. Every gradation of power had to be employed from pianissimo to fortissimo, not forgetting that most difficult of all, the common, but rarely heard, mezzo-forte: all must have the same depth—*la voix bien assise*—and not a superficial voice which seems to come from no deeper than the larynx, and has no carrying power. The whole body must always be behind the voice. Of course, each single part of the machine needed and received continuous supervision and training, and the more it could do the more was required of it. The pupil was occasionally disappointed at not making any apparent headway, but the truth was that the Master knew that so much progress had been made that there was more where that came from. However, in

returning to some song which had not been sung for several weeks, it became obvious that notes which used to be difficult were much easier, and phrases which frightened the life out of you before appeared quite singable.

No article of this length could possibly be complete, nor could it detail all the weapons in his armoury. But one ought not to forget his pianissimo and *mezza voce* singing. The pianissimos were obtained in three ways: what he called *la voix étouffée* (more often applied to men's voices), sung with almost closed mouth and low palate, the larynx being rather high, but the support as deep and strong as possible. He used to describe how he used this voice in Lohengrin's farewell to the swan, "*Nun sei bedankt mein lieber Schwan*," and how other tenors would stand in the wings to see if they could find out what he did to produce this marvellous tone, so clear and yet so full of pain—sung genuinely from the heart. Then there was the piano tone in the head, the pianissimo tone most commonly used, obtained with a very high palate and a certain breath support. And lastly, the pianissimo, which seemed to come from the middle of the back, without any obvious muscular support, with the larynx low, the mouth open, and no apparent resonances, thus differing from the *voix étouffée*. This is a wonderfully carrying tone, but can only be obtained by complete relaxation. This, with slight variations, was the basis of his *mezza voce* singing.

Declamation was to be absolutely natural, beginning with a simple everyday sentence, worked up until the consonants were taken from the diaphragm as deep as possible with the larynx low, but with the vowels remaining as in speech. Of course in everyday speech the larynx is high, but in acting big tragic parts it would be impossible to stand the strain unless the larynx were low. He had heard Salvini act *Otello*, and used to imitate him, using the whole range of his singing voice from low C to top B flat.

The position of the head was important also; he always said, "Sing to the gallery," with head slightly back, but not stiff, except when trying to get the full mask tone, when "you feel as if you were butting your way through." Cheeks and lips were all mobile, the raising of the cheeks as the voice rose in pitch being particularly helpful, indeed essential, for men's upper open notes and all women's high notes. He used to call this "*La grimace de la chanteuse*."

It would be impossible to write here any adequate account of his amazing resourcefulness in teaching. If one means failed to accomplish the end he wanted with a pupil, he would immediately substitute another. His diagnosis of faults was searching and immediate, and his ear for a note not quite properly placed was unfailingly acute. He would never correct faults of intonation in a pupil by

saying: "Can't you hear that you are singing flat," but rather by saying, for example, to a tenor whose E and F were out of tune: "The cheeks are not raised enough and therefore the sound is flat." The cause of faulty intonation is nearly always faulty technique, rather than a defective ear, and you cannot always make people sing in tune by pointing out that they are out of tune. You must show them the reason, and help them to correct the defect.

His teaching has been much criticised by those who did not know what or how he taught, and by some of those pupils who came to be "finished," and were rather hurt that they were bidden to stay to be "begun." He demanded the absolute confidence of his pupils, and those who gave it never regretted it. He also demanded concentration, and the complete attention of pupils. No one could benefit to the full from his teaching who did not give himself time to absorb all he taught, or who did not entrust himself absolutely to the Master's directions, or who did not come in real humility prepared to learn.

He has been criticised also for not having produced great singers among his pupils. Even if that were true—and most of the great singers sought his advice at some time—that is not the standard by which he must be judged. His triumphs were rather the improvement out of all recognition of voices which were neither magnificent nor generous by nature. His absorption in teaching was such that he preferred a voice which he had to "make," rather than a voice to which he had only to add qualities not already there. But cultivated voices, like cultivated flowers, tend to revert to their wild state unless they are carefully tended. His pupils were also expected by their friends to be able to reproduce at once the characteristics of the great de Reszke, their friends forgetting that great singers are the combination of great voices and great brains and great instincts. How rare such a combination must be.

During the twenty years he taught his pupils must have numbered hundreds, from all over the world, to whom he gave liberally and generously from his stores of knowledge and never-failing inspiration. If the fame of a Master be measured by the devotion and love of his pupils, his title is well and honourably secured.

WALTER JOHNSTONE DOUGLAS.

A LESSON WITH THE MASTER.

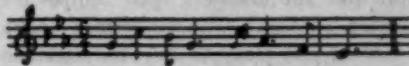
An audition with de Reszke at Nice was rather an alarming prospect it is true, but the great man was so much less alarming than great men often are, in fact he was so friendly and cheerful that it was impossible not to feel at one's ease. I began by singing

an aria of Bach, *Seht was die Liebe thut*. It was quite new to him, and he obviously followed it with close attention, saying half to himself "That's a beautiful phrase! Why, but that's lovely!" as though he had not been prepared for anything so severely classical to be so simple and beautiful. When that was over, and he had made a few comments, such as "We'll make those *pianos* travel better"; "You sing your high notes well, but there is not enough support," he said. "Now sing me something less classical," so I ventured on *Celeste Aida*. He stopped me often, and made me imitate what he was doing, and at the finish complimented me, and said "You sing like a musician." I hadn't yet discovered that whom the Lord loved he chastened, and I went away pleased. After this I kept fairly full notes of all my lessons in case I should ever come away pleased again.

At the risk of being self-important or impudent I should like to say that I went prepared to find a great authority upon operatic tradition, a tenor who had won fame as a singer of every kind of opera in every operatic language, and a teacher who was genuinely interested in teaching. What I did not know, and soon found out, was that the Master was an extremely gifted musician, with a musician's instinct for form, colour, rhythm—everything that goes to make up the real musician in fact—who looked on singing as music, and not as an opportunity for display of the voice; and not merely a teacher, but that rare phenomenon, a creator with a passion for the analysis of his own creations. Moreover, he was a wonderful teacher—*qua* teacher. In my time I had been taught many things from arithmetic to a Lewis gun, but never before had I come across a teacher with such resource and such compelling force, who drew things out of you which you couldn't do by yourself. I admit that I had looked with a somewhat suspicious eye upon *Faust* (which I had never heard), Meyerbeer and Massenet, who were mere names, and worshipped none other gods of the opera save Mozart, Verdi and Wagner (with reservations). But I found all these things took a new light as he sang them and taught them. *Faust* became glowingly beautiful, Werther and Charlotte were real people with real sorrows, and Meyerbeer was revealed to me as being something more than a synonym for insincere vulgarity; it was genuine dramatic music, not without lapses, needless to say. Mozart's natural tenderness and dignity were enhanced; in singing Verdi, whether *Trovatore* or *Otello*, one began to see the big human, fundamental things in him which draw people everywhere to hear him—the *quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*—Wagner perhaps needed no such recommendation, but all the same, one never came away from a lesson on *Lohengrin* or *Walküre* or *Meistersinger* without the gold in the music shining more bright.

I know there was no reason for my suspecting the Master was not a musician, except the snobbish idea that an operatic star couldn't have a really musical soul. I was a fool and I repent of my folly. Nor were his musical sympathies limited; his lessons on the songs of Schubert or Schumann or Brahms were full of perfect understanding. I took him some modern English songs, which he seemed to grasp immediately. He used to say that if he went to hear a Beethoven string quartet he went to sleep, but I couldn't go to sleep when he was singing *Romeo and Juliet*, though I had been brought up in the belief that Gounod was "sloppy stuff." One of his accompanists would testify to the excellence of his criticisms in the matter of playing Chopin, for the Master had that natural gift of ornament and *chic*, which made his singing of Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti so beautiful, and these are the sources of the beauty of so much of Chopin. Those who admire Chopin cannot deny heaven to Bellini—unless they do not know his work.

When the lesson actually came round one was greeted by the Master, "*Bon jour, mon grand ténor*," or sometimes, "*Ebbene, Otello, come sta?*" which latter involved an effort to keep the conversation going in Italian. Then, to the accompanist, "Give me E flat," and then one would be off on some familiar exercise.



To begin with one did not know what was the order of the day, in which of the many "places" at his command the Master would require this to be sung. Last time the lesson was all on mask; what was the betting this time? One had anxiously listened outside the glass doors of the large salon, but without gleaning enough to make sure. Whatever one did was sure to be wrong, and sure enough it was. When one had got hold of the idea of the day, perhaps one might pass muster: so thus to "*Allons, chantez quelque chose*." Let us say that this time it was Lohengrin's Narration that had been prescribed. I am ashamed to say that I had always thought this rather dull, another of Wagner's interminable sermons, which presented nothing very particular. I am ashamed ever to have thought it. As soon as he began *In fernem Land unnahbar eurem Schritten*, I realised that there was an other-worldliness about it all that had been hidden from me. But though the scales fell from my eyes they did not fall from my voice. The first phrase took most of the lesson; first the right place had to be found, "draw back the uvula, pinch the tonsils, push from the diaphragm and use no

nose or head resonance, it is the uvula that controls and directs the quality of tone." But at the same time, one must remember that there is an *r* in *fernem*, and that *Schritten* has two *t*'s, and by the time that one has remembered everything and forgotten everything and feels like an old lady getting into a train with twenty parcels, comes the rebuke: "You, who are an intelligent musician, I'm astonished that you can begin this phrase as though you were calling a waiter in a *café*"; so, humbled, one picked up one's parcels and began again. If luck was in, a pleased smile would greet you, as if to say "I told you so, do what I tell you and it comes right," and then "*Plus loin, plus loin*," and he would sing himself the next phrase, *Liegt eine Burg, die Monsalvat genannt*. How hopeless to try to get the sort of passionate reverence he got into the word *Monsalvat!* a sort of *riparee ulterioris amor*, very simple, very personal, but all accomplished by a definite technique: a tiny upward portamento, a half-smothered *M*, a sudden piano, his marvellous *voix étouffée*; it was like a recipe, shake the bottle and apply the Elixir of Life. *Ein lichter Tempel steht dort inmitten*, "throw light into the voice, strike right above the uvula." So over it again. "But why in such a hurry, take your time; don't say it as though you were a schoolboy saying a piece as quick as you can; sing as though you were improvising it; it gives you authority over the stage, over the orchestra, over the audience; you compel them to wait for you, to pay attention to you." Every phrase could be illustrated in this way, but I must just pick out the characteristic touch:—



"Get your support on the note preceding the high note, and just carry the resonance of the high note further up by drawing back the uvula as far as possible, and when on the note itself, expand the ribs to support it 'like the pinions of a bird.'" But by this time one thing after another had been hurled at one's head (metaphorically) and the wings of a dove were the last things that seemed likely to help out one's leaden stupidity. But the short half-hour was over, one was quite worn out by the strain of trying to remember all the golden truths that had poured out, and one was left feeling that everything had gone wrong. But he would shake one by the hand kindly and say: "A very good lesson, we haven't let anything pass that was wrong."

These were mornings when the sun was shining, but sometimes

the wind would blow from the East and the lesson would begin straight away with "*allons, chantez quelque chose.*" Several phrases would be allowed to pass in an ominous silence, and then "*aie, aie, aie, la vraie voix du ramoneur*, what's the use of singing unless you make the words sound more beautiful? What use is it to stand up on a platform and make a noise like that? And looking as if you were selling something over the counter?" Generally by that moment the parrot, "*Koko*," had intervened with his peculiar cry—so like a tenor in distress—and the Master would turn and say: "You see, *Koko* knows; he can make a noise like that." It was true that this particular parrot would never utter a sound until everything went wrong, and then he would begin his repertoire "*La Presse, L'Intran, La Presse*," and so on, while the tenor grew more and more like the parrot, and began to wonder whether he could bear it any more. One felt by this time that the Master's attention was more worth bestowing on the lower animals than on a tenor who was only just above them at that moment, and certainly not one of God's more impressive works. On these occasions the half-hour lesson seemed to grow to the length of a nightmare. The Master would pour out instructions about the voice, abuse for the singer, blandishments and sympathy for the parrot, till your head went round, and then with a charming smile: "*Aha, le pauvre Capitaine, il est ahuri ce matin: regardez bien sa figure.*" Then, in the last ten minutes everything seemed transformed, and suddenly one became able to sing as though by a miracle, everything fell into its place and the "*Flügel der Gesänge*" were really spread. It was worth it to have gone through all that Slough of Despond and then actually to tread for a moment on the Celestial Mountains. It is quite true that one soon found oneself back again on the plains, but a breath of mountain air is invigorating to the spirit. The Master's magnetic power had achieved the impossible, and like Feste's music, had "*drawn three souls out of one weaver.*"

Finally, I should like to put it down formally in print that he was quite extraordinarily conscientious as a teacher. He knew that his pupils had often found the money for their lessons with difficulty, and he gave them not only their money's worth, but pressed down and running over. His generosity to those pupils who had real financial difficulties was quite unbounded, even within the scope of my limited knowledge. To me, as a singer, he set a standard of art to which I know I can never attain, and to me, as a teacher, a standard of high conscientiousness and purpose which I hope I shall never forget. As a great singer he gave the public its due, and as a great Master he gave himself ungrudgingly in the service of his pupils.

W.

ON SCHUMANN—AND READING BETWEEN THE LINES

We all know that Clara Schumann's life was entirely devoted to Robert Schumann and his ideals, so that it is impossible to talk about the music of Schumann without more than a passing reference to his "Clara." At a time when others scarcely dared to bring forward Schumann's music in public, Clara Schumann was practically the one link between his genius and the world. She not only acted as his pioneer, but during all her life, like a chosen Priestess, she faithfully guarded the soul of his music. Better than any other, she was fitted by her great musical genius to reproduce the spirit of Schumann which she knew so intimately, and with this musical genius went that very rare moral power which enabled her to overcome a life of difficulties unsurpassed. We must realise this if we are to grasp the heroic mould of her personality. As a wife she fought for her husband, as a mother she fought for her children (she was left a widow at 37, and Schumann's music was scarcely known, and what *was* known was not generally liked), and still she remained supreme as pioneer of Schumann's *new art*: for Schumann was a revolutionary.

Do we easily find in one personality a genius as a pianist, a genius for love, together with the moral power to remain pure and undisturbed of soul? In two different spheres of activity she championed his ideals. First and foremost as his interpreter on the platform: also as inspirer of younger musicians and students to carry on the ideals which the genius of her husband enshrined. And only ten years before her death she completed the monumental educational edition of Schumann for Breitkopf and Härtel. This edition may have its printer's errors, Madame Schumann was ill just when the proofs were required, but all the same, it contains information that no other edition can give: besides, the errors are nearly always obvious ones.

We all know that a great creative genius, besides representing the distinctive characteristics of his age, is also the exponent of an element eternal as Nature. Clara Schumann's power of holding by this element, made her the great authority she was, and is, and always will be. Therefore those of us who have had the inestimable privilege of receiving our traditions and practising them first-hand, ought to endeavour, however humbly, to hand down as much as we have imbibed of the wonderful traditions of Robert and Clara Schumann. By tradition I do not mean learned essays, anecdotes, and hearsay. I mean something really great. I mean a great ideal, an uplifting and ennobling ideal, performed and practised through one generation to another. It is tradition that makes the British Navy the British Navy. Such traditions can never become obsolete. Does one sometimes confound tradition with anecdote?

The Schumann tradition does not begin with Schumann! It begins with Bach, and goes on through Beethoven, and all the great Masters who lived in an age in which one could find time for contemplation. Clara Schumann summed up the essentials in these words:—

“Play what is written; play it *as it is written.*”

“It all stands there”

“My man is nothing if he is not rhythmic.”

“But though full of sentiment, he is *never sentimental.*”

Now in taking up a work of Schumann, and reading it like a piece of literature, what are the main characteristics? The long drawn, deep breathing melody in one long line with one idea all through; which the Germans call “*das Getragene*”—“Eusebius,” in fact. Then, the great rhythmical varieties, rhythms obvious and rhythms *not* obvious, but which are of equal importance—beautiful waves of melodious flow, not only in the melodies themselves, but in the passage writing: the extraordinary wealth and fineness of the inner voices, which, though they have sometimes to be looked for, are “all there” and which play a most significant part: and the manifold imitations, almost canons, etc., which, coming as they do, in the composer's free writing, have a particular charm of their own. Here it should be especially observed that in Schumann, a great deal of that very canon and imitation is not evolved deliberately, but discovered by him to his own surprise after completing the com-

position. They are, in short, symbols of his emotions and not mere production by craftsmanship. The sphere of his art is all expressed in his letters to Clara Wieck. *Apropos* of canons he writes:—"It is strange how I write almost everything in canon, and then only detect the imitation afterwards, discovering in the same way inversions, rhythms in contrary motion, etc."

I venture to say that if one reads and plays these essentials with open ears as well as eyes, that one cannot but arrive at reproducing some of the subtlety of Schumann's genius. Also one should certainly become acquainted with Schumann's own literary work—especially the Early Letters (*Jugendbriefe*), the *Gesammelten Schriften* (translated as "Music and Musicians"—though a better translation would be "Collected Writings"), and the life and letters of Clara Schumann, edited by Professor Litzmann, especially the first volume. In the *Gesammelten Schriften* and the Early Letters—one finds the true key to Schumann's generous nature, his longings and ideals and his own description of the Davidbund, and of his dual nature which, we all know, he christened Florestan and Eusebius. Florestan, the ardent, the passionate, the aspiring, wild and exuberant, and Eusebius, the dreamer of a beautiful and a gentle world, never sentimental.

Schumann is mystical, he is the teller of fairy tales, he is intimate, he is exhilarating, he can be child-like and his world also contains much humour, but here, again, the German word "Humor" must not be confounded with our word "fun." Schumann's is the "Humor" (sensibility?) of the Romanticist, allied to sunshine and tears. Wit has nothing to do with it. In every mood, and at every turn he is characteristically noble, and always spiritual; and even in his wildest and most joyous moments he is never boisterous or vulgar. He is, in short, the true Romanticist, devoid of the least taint of melodrama, sentimentality, anecdotes and "art."

We all know that the trend of to-day is rush and hurry, short cuts, machinery, commercialism, hectic speed, a great deal of superficiality, much conceit and self-advertisement, all of which is most antipathetic to Schumann's ideals. So that in order to read between Schumann's lines one must steadily refuse to let any one of these later influences poison one's power of interpretation.

Remembering that, Schumann has written titles and suggestions of moods and not photographic, realistic, or anecdotal descriptions of happenings in the material world, take, for instance, the *Vogel als Prophet* (Op. 82)—called by the translator the "Prophet Bird"—whatever that bird may be—let us call it a "Bird of Omen."

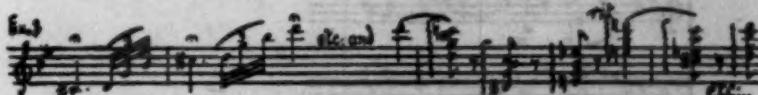
*Andante con molto tenore.*Ex. 1. *Lengstem, sehr sent.*

The flitting of the bird amongst the branches is obvious, but the omen is what we must read between the lines. As the Meisterin put it: "He do not hop from tree to tree! He is a sad little bird who tell of a sad story to come; you must tell the story."

In such a mystical and subtle genius as Schumann's, to emphasise the obvious background is to kill the spirituality and turn the *Vogel als Prophet* at once into an anecdote. One hears it played:



Neither must one make long pauses at the end of each phrase:



although the rhythm may be suited to the stationary position of a Prima Ballerina with her foot high in the air and a warning gesture of the forefinger.

Poor Schumann! Did ever anyone suffer so much from vulgar adaptations, orchestral arrangements of subtle piano pieces obviously only possible to be realised by one person and through the medium for which they were written? The exceptions are when the piece arranged is not very subtle. I wonder how Schumann, or anyone, would like to hear his most sacred and intimate conversations turned into a loud chorus?

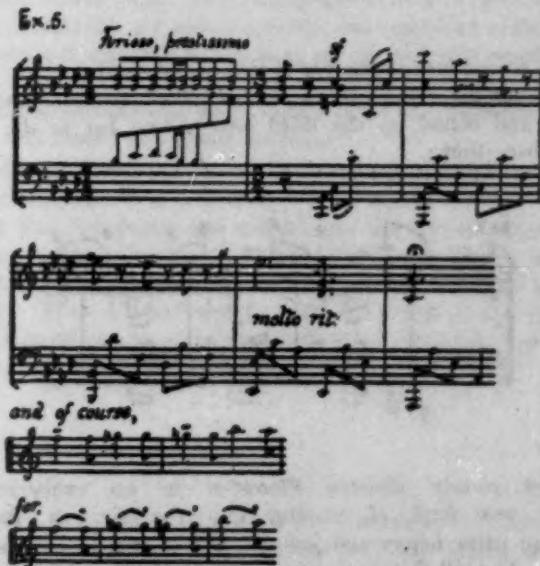
Take the romance in F sharp major (Op. 28). This is one of the greatest examples of that characteristic of Eusebius—das Getragene—to repeat it, the long-drawn deep breathing melody with one idea all through. Of course, the charm of this beautiful little poem is just its simplicity, and "Einfach" is Schumann's word, as guide to the spirit of the work. Clara Schumann was especially fond of this work and her direction was, for the first section, "*Innerlich ruhig*" (keep quiet inside); and in the second section the feeling of pressing forward must never become obvious and thus degenerate into an accelerando, which would not only upset the balance but would suddenly represent Eusebius in the spirit of Florestan! The emotional balance of the whole work must ever be repose—and the performer must be physically reposeful if he is to enter into the mental repose and convey that to the listener. I think that in these days of psychological knowledge everyone will understand how greatly the mental is affected by the physical as well as the reverse.

Now take *Aufschwung* (Op. 12)—a work written in a very different



style. The title of this well known work is badly translated by the word "Soaring." *Aufschwung* means "Aspiration."

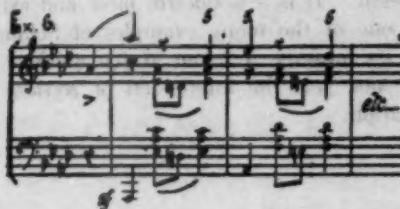
How do we know that the aspirant is still fettered to this plane, that he is not sufficiently free to soar though he is striving after it? The very nature of the melody denotes it; so does its treatment—the great deep bass foundation—C, and the important chain of C's, which prepare the descent. It is a wonderful piece and extremely difficult. *Aufschwung* is one of the many examples of Schumann that completely fails in its message if taken at too quick a tempo, because if it is too fast one gets the impression of restless fuss instead of exuberant aspiration.



This rendering evoked the characteristic remark of Clara Schumann: "I do find it so undelicate when they will come and play to me the music of my man in such a manner." Unfortunately, the composer cannot dispense with the reproducer.

Editors have much to answer for: Here is a lesser instance, amongst many greater ones. In the *Fantasiestueck* (Op. 21, No. 4), entitled "Grillen," which in this instance means "Whims of Rhythm," occurs the well-known passage in three-four time be-

ginning at bar 26:—In a much-used “world” edition the phrasing we read is:—



where the second beat of the bar is tied to the third.

But Schumann himself *separated* the second beat from the third and bound up the third beat of one bar to the first of the next bar—thus:



This most clearly denotes Florestan in an exuberant vein when he was fond of leaping into the air, as Beethoven when in an extra happy and joyous mood is said to have stood on his head! Now all this may appear to be a very small matter, but the one phrasing is most commonplace, the other most uncommon. And there are hundreds of other such instances. With a monumental edition, like Clara Schumann’s “Volksausgabe,” there is nothing to prevent one from at any rate consulting the fountain head with regard to Schumann’s indications and spirit. The craze is for what is called “New Readings of the Dead Composers.” But only when the reproducer has made himself the slave of the Master—whether dead or alive—can his readings be really original.

Schumann was a poet with full knowledge of the balance of construction and detail which go to make a great work of art, and he was most particular that his indications should be the means of con-

veying his spiritual intentions as clearly as possible. Brahms was another; Debussy another. I went to Paris on purpose to hear the latter play his own works—I wanted to see whether he wrote what he meant. He was most punctilious as to the difference between piano, pianissimo, and *ppp*—it was a case of “play what is written.” And as to Beethoven, one has only to read that wonderful letter to his publisher, about the proofs of the A major 'cello Sonata, to realise how much importance Beethoven attached to accuracy; and accuracy does not mean dullness. But art is long, and there are no short cuts.

So, in dealing with Schumann, we must put ourselves in the attitude we should adopt towards any great man of genius. Read his works reverently, not only the notes, but according to the written indications set down by him and then try to read between the lines. First find out what the line is, then see what that line passes through: both as to phrases and emotional value. Find the balancing point—and then will come the original reading.

In conclusion, I can only repeat Clara Schumann's words:—“Play what is written, and as it is written. It all stands there.” “There is nothing that Schumann has written that has not significance, not a note—not a dot—not a rest. Every note must be played with love and nothing passed over.” She still remains his defender and true interpreter. Thus a great woman goes on living in the immortal works of a great genius of whose ideals I have tried in my humble way to say something.

This is not the moment to discuss the Pianoforte Concerto at any length, but I should much like to share with any reader who may be interested, some impressions of Madame Clara Schumann's performance of the Concerto in the Leipzig Gewandhaus on the occasion of her jubilee: a record performance even for that great genius. A student, I had come from Frankfort and was privileged to be present at the private rehearsal as well as the concert.

With the very first chords she plunged her listeners into the mood dominating the whole of the first movement, and one realised the great foundational line of thought: passionate aspiration. She showed us that it was not as a preparation for a sickly, sentimental melody that Schumann has chosen that elemental introduction with its precipitous descent in chords. We heard the clarinet solo played in the same tempo as the introduction, and realised that Schumann

has indeed given the whole responsibility of the tempo to the pianist. No small responsibility. The solo was perfectly free, full of nuance, but without *wrong* ritenutos and sentimentality. In short, Schumann's "Allegro Affettuoso" is not an affected allegro.

At the animato (not much faster, but always "taking wing"), great importance was given to accenting, though not over-accenting, the triplets which go to form the rolling accompaniment, as well as the distinct rhythmical melodic design of the accompaniment itself. Each arpeggio rolled out to the very end, it was spacious, brilliant, but never flurried—it wings were never clipped.

Then in the great middle section, where the three rhythms each play their part simultaneously—the melody rhythm and the two underlying rhythms of the accompaniment and the marching basses)—the values of each and all were made perfectly clear to the listener, together with the foundational line of thought—aspiration. The cadenza—from quite a simple beginning, piano, and as coming from a distance, but not overdone, unfolded as naturally as the petals of a blown rose. The coda, not too fast, by reason of its emotional value.

The Intermezzo Clara Schumann played with a certain simple and eager sincerity, and not too slowly. And on this memorable occasion one heard that the orchestra is responsible for changing, in two chords, the whole mood of the intermezzo into one of breathless suspense and tension, ever more and more pianissimo until it prepares for Florestan's exuberant outburst of triumphant victory—the finale. That she never took so fast as to lose its nobility and pride as well as exuberance. But she possessed to such a degree that rare and consummate power of dominating every mood at the moment, and the necessary technique which enabled her adequately to convey every shade to the listener.

She was very particular about rhythm, and at that rehearsal, not being quite satisfied that the orchestra was not going to run away in the fugal part, she suddenly walked from the platform half-way down into the hall, and stood and listened to the effect, until convinced that it was going to be perfect on such an occasion.

The coda she took quietly and with the necessary elegance of melody-technique, thereby creating the contrast which alone can bring out the value of the last exuberant climax for which Schumann has reserved most of his pianoforte percussion.

During the whole performance, both at the rehearsal and the concert, one could not but notice the love in the playing of the orchestra; for there were still many older men amongst them, who as

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youths, had played under Schumann's own direction when Robert and Clara lived in Leipzig. In other words, the practised tradition was there, and the "trifles that make perfection"—to use Michael Angelo's words—came therefore as a matter of course.

FANNY DAVIES.

ON THE COMPOSITION OF ENGLISH SONGS

SOME sentences from a criticism in *The Times* on a recital of songs (mostly new) by Vaughan Williams, given last March, incite me to a discussion of principles. It is not my wish to enter into controversy with the critic over the merits of the actual songs sung, which were as entirely new to me as to him; nor am I at all concerned with his criticisms on the singer. But in his final paragraph he enters upon a question of general aesthetic principle as regards the setting of words to music, and it is this general principle which I wish here to investigate at greater length.

Here is the original paragraph:—

The new songs give us nothing but the appropriate attitude of mind with which to read their well-chosen words; they do little to heighten them or make them memorable. They are, indeed, not songs but music with a synchronised motto. In fact, the voice is singing; in principle they hardly differ from the recitation-to-music. We say good-bye to the old song of Schubert and Mozart and Purcell with a sigh; that will never come back as a form any more than the gods of Greece will as a framework of society. Its lines would be out of focus. We are fain to do obeisance to the rising star. This new marriage of music and poetry, in which both manage their own incomes and possess their own souls, may be as fruitful of happiness as the old *patria potestas*, when human feeling has had time to work over it.

The technique of song-writing is for the modern English composer one of the most important foundations of his whole art—perhaps the most important of all. That is, it ought to be regarded by him in this light; as a matter of fact, the modern composer generally seems to regard song-writing as a matter of mere inspiration. Our composers produce an enormous number of songs, judging by the appearance of the music-shops, but there are very few worth singing. There are very few of our singers who take a serious interest in contemporary English songs, and as far as I can judge from conversation with them, they find it very hard to discover new English songs that really deserve the care which they devote to their interpretation. I do not wish at this moment to discuss the views of professional singers on what they consider, sometimes quite rightly, to be the faults of young composers. They have been put forward often enough, both in this periodical and elsewhere. The importance of the real technique of song-writing—quite apart from the knack of making songs which are effective on the concert-platform—is a far deeper matter. It concerns all English composers, whether song-

writers by preference or not, for two fundamental reasons. The first is that we English are by natural temperament singers rather than instrumentalists. If we look back at the whole history of English music we must admit that our best work has always been written for voices, and that our most characteristic instrumental work has perpetually been influenced by the vocal instinct. If there is an English style in music it is founded firmly on vocal principles, and, indeed, I have heard Continental observers remark that our whole system of training composers is conspicuously vocal as compared with that of other countries. The man who was born with a fiddle under his chin, so conspicuous in the music of Central and Eastern Europe, hardly exists for us. Our instinct, like that of the Italians, is to sing.

Yet not to sing like the Italians, for climatic conditions have given us a different type of language and apparently a different type of larynx. This brings me to the second fundamental reason why song-writing affects the whole style of English musical composition. We are not only a nation of singers; we are a nation of poets. We need not take too seriously the people who say sweepingly that English poetry is the only real poetry that there has ever been since the days of Chaucer. But it will be fairly generally agreed by students of literature that from the days of Chaucer to the present time the flow of poetry has been far more copious and continuous, and has at the same time maintained consistently a far higher general level of excellence in England than in any other country. It has, indeed, often been suggested that the fertility of England in poetry has been the cause of her comparative barrenness in music. I am not sure that this theory will bear investigation; but there certainly seem to have been periods in our history, such as the nineteenth century, when our natural sense of music was to some extent transferred to the art of poetry, as it was in the days of classical Greece. Milton was a musician; but among the poets of the nineteenth century the only one who was seriously interested in music was the one who wrote the most unmusical verse, and those whose poetry is richest in musical qualities professed little or no ear for music itself.

Our poetry perpetually affects our singing. Both are affected by our natural temperament, and no doubt by the acquired inhibitions of our education. We sing, but we do not let ourselves go in the way that Italians do, and even if we wanted to do so, the words and rhythms of our poetry would perpetually restrain us. It used to be said in old days that English was an unsingable language; but that doctrine has passed into limbo and needs no refutation to-day. None the less, it is still worth while reminding teachers of singing, and composers too, that the real reason why English was supposed to

be unsingable was because it moved at a quicker pace than Italian or German, so that a song by a German or Italian composer, singable enough to the original foreign words, became difficult, if not impossible when translated into English, because English syllables could not be prolonged to the same extent as those of the other languages. The style of true English singing—I mean of ideal singing as the primary source of the English composer's inspiration—is therefore determined by the rhythms and the pace of ideal English speech—that is, of poetry.

Composers, I find, are very shy of any scientific observation of their methods of producing music, partly, perhaps, from a sense of modesty and partly from a nervous fear that if they investigate the mechanical details of this perfectly natural function they will render themselves unable to perform it. It is a dangerous thing to suggest to any composer that some passage in his last new work owes its presence to a recollection, perhaps a very happily and ingeniously developed one, of something in, say, Wagner or Stravinsky; he will assure his commentator with much wrath and indignation that he has not the remotest acquaintance with the work in question. My invariable reply to this is: "Well, if you don't know it, you *ought* to know it!" Some composers seem to think it is keeping dangerous company to know any works except their own. They are, I find, terribly frightened of knowing things. Their inspiration is so precious that it must never run the risk of being contaminated by thought, still less by ingenuity. I conclude from this that it runs somewhat thin, and is valued in proportion to its rareness. It may seem a flat contradiction of what I have already said if I complain that our composers are far too much under the spell of the pianoforte and the organ. Heaven forbid that they should be fiddlers by natural instinct—there is enough bad German and Austrian music in the world already. But the pianoforte is a dangerous toy, whether the composer plays it well or badly, because it falsifies all values. If the composer plays the pianoforte fluently he is constantly tempted into the same sort of rhetorics as that of Liszt. If he plays badly, his bad technique is a perpetual hindrance to the freedom of his thought. Worse still, the indifferent pianist is only too often an organist in disguise. Here we may observe a drugging of conscience, which it needs the ingenuity of a Jesuit confessor to analyse. For the unfortunate sinner believes that by playing the pianoforte badly he is writing vocally; he is not—he is writing for the organ and not even writing well for that, because the inevitable crisp attack of the pianoforte's hammers deludes him into thinking that his music is less dreary than it is. You cannot compose vocally at the pianoforte; you must go out into the garden and bawl at the

top of your voice. For the instinct to sing is physical; it comes naturally from the muscular contraction of the diaphragm. The natural man sings in his bath; he is in a state of nature—though we may admit that he derives encouragement thereto from the peculiarly favourable acoustic properties of bathrooms.

It is our social habits that inhibit us from giving way to this natural instinct in other places. Beethoven, who was not much troubled by these things, habitually sang when he went out for walks. This inhibition of natural vocal instinct is a product of modern civilisation, like the equally unnatural habit of reading poetry in silence. Poetry has really no more existence than music until it is uttered aloud. It may be argued that this habit has developed imagination. The composition of a modern symphony certainly demands a far more acutely developed imagination than the composition of a four-part vocal motet in the style of Palestrina; but this imagination is not the creative instinct—it is the power of imagining sounds in their various qualities, a power of memory rather than an act of creation. In so far as it is essentially an act of memory it may even be dangerous to creation; and the experienced composer who "knows the ropes" to a large extent supplants direct imaginative memory by habit. This is an additional danger.

Memory, and especially memory reinforced by long habit, is always a danger to the composer, and in some ways a peculiar danger to the English composer. For the music which we musical Englishmen remember instinctively is most of it foreign music. Not that we need be frightened of foreign music and try to exclude it as far as possible from our ears. History shows that all European nations have submitted to foreign influences at one time or another. The English influenced the Dutch in the days of Dunstable, the Dutch dominated the Italians, the Italians taught the Germans, and the Germans taught us again. Even if we confined our educational scheme for composers to a study of English music alone, we should never be able to escape foreign influences. But we should, at any rate, see that in the course of English musical history what chiefly differentiates the English madrigalists from their Italian teachers—Henry Lawes, too, from Peri, Locke from Luigi Rossi, Purcell from Lully and Stradella, Greene from old Scarlatti, Arne from Galuppi, Bishop from Rossini, Parry and Stanford from Brahms and Wagner—is the rhythmical difference imposed on their music by the rhythms of English poetry. Every one of these composers is first and foremost a composer of vocal music; every one of them, at his best, was under the vigorous influence of genuine English poetry. I should like to believe that they all had something definitely English in their constructive outlook on music, some expression not of

English primary instincts, but of English intellectual methods in the way that they handled their thematic material; but this is a very difficult matter to analyse with any sort of scientific accuracy, and I mistrust instinctive dogmatising on so delicate a problem, however attractive the dogma suggested may be. But I may point out here that, in spite of all I have said about the vocal origins of English music, folksong will not of itself make great English music. It is a dangerous influence, like that of the organ and pianoforte. We do not really feel it in our bones. We are civilised people, and the "return to nature" only too easily becomes a pose. Anyone can write sham folksongs nowadays. Individual folk-melodies may be of high musical quality, and they may in certain cases be associated with traditional poetry of equally high quality; but, generally speaking, the folksong, as a musical influence, is a danger to the composer because it is a thing apart from poetry. Its shape has been originally derived from English speech-rhythms, no doubt; but from the moment it becomes fixed as a tune, to be handed down from one singer to another, its rigidity makes it useless as material for the modern constructive imagination. The rhythmic shape by which we recognise it as one of the general category of folksongs makes it a conventional thing.

The reader will say that I have begun this paper at the wrong end. Let us consider the technique of actual song-writing instead of the influence that song-writing may have on the composer of symphonies and operas. The technique of song-writing has been authoritatively set forth by Professor Stanford and Mr. Corder in their respective treatises on composition. The delightful thing about Mr. Corder's book is its irony—one never quite knows where it stops. He is not a writer for the young and innocent; but those who have begun on Stanford may read him with profit and amusement. Stanford was an infuriating teacher, the more so because he was always right. He insisted on finished craftsmanship above all things, and, as I have said, young composers, and old ones, too, I fear, seldom have the patience to acquire such finished craftsmanship in song-writing as Stanford loved to analyse in his classic favourite example of a perfect song, the "An ein Bild" of Brahms.

A song is a piece of music. Therefore it must have musical form; it must be intelligible as a piece of music independently of its words. It is curiously difficult to make composers see this point. The reason, I suspect, is that they do not know what form really is. But I know that I am right on this point, because our *Times* critic corroborates me, if only unconsciously; and *The Times*, even in its unconscious moments, is obviously always right. The days of Schubert, Mozart and Purcell, he says with a conscious sigh, are over. What is it

that he regrets about their passing? When I note the order in which he places these composers I am tempted to cross-examine him. Was that sigh for "Die Forelle" and the "Müllerlieder"? for "Voi che sapete" and "Batti, batti"? I refrain, for he has named Purcell; and the mere sight of Purcell's name sets me thinking of that adorable song in the "Fairy Queen"—"When I have often heard young maids complaining." Yes, that is a perfect song if ever there was one. That sigh was heaved, not just for the pretty tunes—at least, I hope not—but for the perfection of pure musical form. After all, even if it was merely for the pretty tunes, the fact that a man remembers a song as a pretty tune is in itself proof that it has a definite and easily intelligible musical form. Form is precisely what distinguishes "tune" from recitative or from "endless melos."

Purcell's tune is a thing of the past because its form is. In this particular case I think the form of the poem owes more to the musician than the form of the tune does to the poet. They are perfectly harmonised, and it is obvious to any student of Purcell and Dryden (if these words are not actually by Dryden himself they are by a singularly happy imitator of his style) that songs of this type were written to be set to music; and Dryden, as we know, took peculiar pains over the words he wrote for singing. The tune, one must admit, is, in spite of all its beauty, a standardised type of song-tune. Our modern poets might be quite willing to collaborate with our composers in the same way; but they cannot, for the composers have created no standardised type of tune—the real composers, that is, not the manufacturers of shop-ballads. Their nearest approach is the sham folksong, and that is not very far removed from the shop-ballad. Purcell's tune is in its origin a *coranto*; its equivalent to-day would be the fox-trot. But to pursue this idea farther would lead me off the track; it may be noted that in the history of classical song conventional dance-rhythms, whether minuet or waltz, are very rare apart from the stage, and at the present moment we are not yet considering the technique of opera.

Classical tonality depends on certain rhythmical principles, and the classical forms are only the extension of these joint rhythmical and harmonic principles. Classical tonality being incompatible with modern rhythmical tendencies, it has been abandoned, and classical forms will have to follow it into oblivion. But that does not mean that henceforward music will have no sense of form whatever. Some sort of form it must have or it will not be recognisable as music at all. That is, indeed, the most difficult problem of the moment—the designing of new forms. Here lies for the modern composer the advantage of a severe training in the composition of songs, for a

song, to be a work of art, requires the most delicate balance of form. I suspect that many young composers, and some who are no longer young, imagine that form does not exist outside the pages of Ebenezer Prout. The nineteenth century was an age of discipline, and we who, surviving it, have reached the age when we are expected to be authoritative teachers or critics, are either the slaves of Prout and Rockstro, or have thrown them over in sudden horror, only to find ourselves more uncomfortable without them than we were under their iron rule. Some unintelligent Wagnerite of days gone by said that in a song the form must arise out of the words, that is, out of the dramatic significance of the words. This theory and its unintelligent application has led many composers astray.

A song is a piece of music; therefore it must have musical form. And since the song is a piece of music to be sung by a singer, that form—which is the composer's creative thought made manifest to the listener—must be expressed by the singer. That was the natural thing in old days. One could sing that song of Purcell's without any accompaniment, and it would be completely intelligible. Modern conditions do not admit of a voice part being thus completely separated from its accompaniment. Even in Purcell's day it was far from being invariably possible. But however subtle was the interplay between the voice and the instrument (and for the most subtle examples the reader may investigate the chamber cantatas of Alessandro Scarlatti), the voice was always the chief interpreter of the musician's thought. This is not a question of dynamics; it is a question of the actual musical material which the voice has to sing. *The Immortal Hour* may not always be good music, judged by purely musical standards; but there is no getting over the fact that it is an opera of marvellous compelling power. That is because the voices dominate it. Not that the orchestra is kept soft so as to avoid drowning the voices; the point is that the voices have the music which expresses the composer's most essential thought. Whenever for a moment they do not, as in Dalua's opening monologue, the opera loses its hold on us.

The form of a song, then, must be made clear in the voice part. Here we come to that most difficult problem, most especially difficult for the English composer, the relation of music to poetry. As regards form, every song has to find its own; that is the fascination about song-writing—the problem has to be solved afresh every time. But certain difficulties may be disregarded, for the conditions which produced them are nowadays things of the past. We put into the wastepaper-basket at once all songs of which the words are without literary merit. I am glad to see that our younger critics take a firm

line on this question. Thus Mr. Dennis Arundell writes in *The Music Bulletin*:

Of some sixty-five publications sent for review, barely twenty deserve a notice. . . . Bad words and clichés are usually responsible for the lack of merit in the songs.

We put into the wastepaper-basket, too, all songs in which the words, however good, are treated without due regard to their sense and their rhythm. We shall probably have to do the same thing with all songs in which words or phrases are repeated. I am strongly tempted, too, to discard all modern settings of poets of an earlier date. This sounds drastic; and I daresay when it came to the point I should make exceptions. But as a general rule I think musicians ought to set contemporary poets. It seems incongruous to treat the ancients in a modern style. Besides, our musicians hardly ever do treat them honestly in a modern style; they make the old poetry an excuse for dressing up in some sort of fancy costume. Perhaps I have lived too much in the music of past centuries; anyway, I know how easy it is to compose in a sham antique manner.

This may perhaps be regarded as a criticism on the songs of Vaughan Williams which suggested the present discussion. It would be unjust to call them sham antiques. But they are, at any rate, studies in archaism. "Merciles Beautee" is an experiment in technique, an attempt to see whether it is possible to make a new style out of antique principles. The four hymns stand in a class apart. They are religious music, and archaism appears to be a necessary ingredient in the composition of sacred song. We see it in all the works of the past which have made a deep impression on the devout—in Palestrina and his imitators, in Leo, in certain works of J. S. Bach, in the church music of Mozart, in Mendelssohn, Liszt, Gounod, Elgar and Perosi. It is in many ways a moral principle rather than a purely musical one, and lies entirely outside the scope of this paper. On the other hand, it is quite reasonable for a composer who wishes to escape from classical tonality and form to seek in the music of an earlier period formal principles which may serve as some sort of guide to the future. The ground bass is one of these; it is evidently adaptable to quite modern conditions. Even Purcell modernised it to suit the methods of his day, and Vaughan Williams's songs on a ground are not in the least archaic.

Modern instrumentalists never seem to know what to do with a ground bass. It went out of fashion soon after the death of Purcell, and the development of the pianoforte in the nineteenth century brought about an entirely different conception of the bass in music, whether ground or not. One need only listen to the average

accompanist who has to play for an old Italian aria or violin sonata : he never seems to realise that his left hand must keep up a firm *cantabile*. The violoncellists are no better; Popper, I suppose, did not deal in ground basses. The only people nowadays who understand how to play a ground bass are the organists, thanks to Bach. But the unfortunate result is that any musician who approaches a ground bass now is tempted to think of it in terms of the organ if he approaches it with any intelligence at all. To play a ground bass of Purcell requires a very sensitive judgment, for it is always hovering between outspoken personality and complete impersonality, according to the mood of the moment. It may be the means of creating a sense of the serenest calm or of the most terrible obsession. The pianoforte, even when the player understands the outlook of the composer, is not a satisfactory instrument for this type of singing bass. That is probably the reason why Vaughan Williams has set the *Three Rondels* for strings. It is also one reason why the songs on a ground, and perhaps some of the others, made the *Times* critic uncomfortable. The composer has concentrated all expression in the voice part, and has reduced the accompaniment to the barest suggestion. There were moments, as I listened to the songs, when I recalled certain songs of Schönberg, who, with a very different outlook on the technique of voices and instruments, yet pursued analogous methods. But Schönberg, being a German, has little interest in the subtleties of vocal expression, and an acute interest in those of instrumental technique, however few may be the notes that he puts down on paper. The fewer notes one gives the pianoforte to play, the more difficult it becomes to make them expressive; the art of the pianoforte is so largely an art of *evocacion*, as Albéniz called it, that it cannot properly interpret modern tendencies until those tendencies have developed a consistent style in other and directer media.

That, I think, was why our critic was too conscious of mere recitation in these songs. There is historic precedent for the recitation type of English song. Henry Lawes was not a great composer, for he was curiously wanting in technical accomplishment; but he is undoubtedly a very original and interesting composer. The student of old English music will find that the methods of Lawes are more skilfully developed by Coleman and Locke, and from these it is a short step to Purcell. Their declamation is still a model for the composer of to-day, and their type of declamatory song, with its fine literary sense, is still peculiarly appropriate to the English language and the English style of singing it. Declamatory is perhaps not the right word, for declamation may suggest an exaggeratedly rhetorical style of delivery, and

that is not characteristic of Lawes, Locke and Purcell, though in church or on the stage the tendency to rhetoric is of necessity more apparent. There is not the least need for this style to degenerate into mere recitation. If it appears to do so in Lawes, the reason is more often to be found in the fact that his recitation is at times faulty as recitation, and still more in the fact that he writes very weak basses, showing that he had a weak sense of musical form. Purcell, on the contrary, writes such vigorous basses that even his straight theatrical recitative is astonishingly powerful in purely musical effect.

English is a peculiarly difficult language to set to music because of its intricate relations between stress and quantity. To translate Purcell's recitatives into German is almost impossible; it is equally impossible to translate Hungarian recitative into German. Bartók's opera *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, for instance, would go far more easily into English. These intricacies of stress and quantity in English have given considerable trouble to the prosodists. I have sometimes approached poets about them; but poets are as restive under analysis as composers. Their usual reply to me is that of course a poet feels these things instinctively: if he does not, he is no poet. The Poet Laureate has approached the subject scientifically, being a musician as well as a poet. I do not know whether poets read his studies in rhythm; but certainly every English musician ought to ponder them deeply.

English is a vigorously stressed language, but it knows quantity as well, and its quantitative differences, as Dr. Bridges has pointed out, are much more subtle than the conventional division into longs and shorts, crotchets and quavers. But English people tend more and more in ordinary speech to neglect quantity and exaggerate stress. Our notoriously bad articulation is due partly to laziness, but still more, I think, to a desire for speed. We want to make up for the delay caused by the lack of inflexions; we cut them off originally, I suppose, for the sake of speed, and are now trying to save the time occupied by the extra pronouns and prepositions which perform their functions for them. A man who articulates well is voted a bore, because he takes such a long time in getting his words out, even if he speaks fairly fast. The average effective public speaker does not take much pains over precise articulation; he concentrates on putting the main syllables across. A speaker who articulates and does not shout is the rare exception. As a result of our ordinary conversational habits we find it very difficult to speak English slowly, even if we have been taught to speak it clearly. Singers of "patter" songs will confirm this.

Speed and stress are closely connected with each other. The faster we speak the more strongly we stress. This is a thing which the composer must consider very carefully. Is it not desirable that we should try to get back to a rather slower habitual rate of speaking English—I mean at least in the speaking of poetry—in which the quantitative values of syllables would come into greater prominence? This is pre-eminently a question for the sensitive musician. For him, too, is the problem of how to reproduce these delicate speech rhythms in music. Musicians often complain of the deficiencies of our present notation. What seems to worry them most is the problem of sharps and flats. To me the chief shortcoming of our notation is its incapacity to express subtleties of rhythm. It is the rigidity of our notation which makes it so strangely difficult for many musicians to realise what subtleties of rhythm there may be. The difficulties experienced in madrigal singing are only a small fraction of the real problem. As it is, we supplement the deficiencies as best we can by personal interpretation and oral tradition—both of them dangerous practices, for they encourage an attitude of faith instead of a thirst for accurate knowledge.

My impression, in listening for the first time to these new songs of Vaughan Williams, was that their declamation, though just, was generally on the slow side. It probably presented some difficulty to the singer, even to so accomplished a speaker as Mr. Steuart Wilson; but slow speech is a technical accomplishment which it is the duty of the singer, as of the actor, to acquire. It is especially important for the singer, because, although the speaker in moments of heightened emotion can quicken his pace and emphasise his stresses, the natural tendency of the singing voice in such circumstances is to expand and to go slow. The pianoforte in these cases resembles the speaker rather than the singer; its mechanism makes for accent, and its quality of tone demands speed in moments of excitement. Here is the great danger for the composer who mentally or physically composes at the pianoforte. With the best intentions of writing a really singable song, habit is too strong for him; his emotion is in his finger-tips, not in his diaphragm, and just when he ought to let the voice expand to its utmost emotional intensity, he ruins its effect by hurrying its rhythm and as often as not drowns it with the noise of the pianoforte's disproportionate power of stress-accent. That is the sad result of mere inspiration; if the composer would only use his ingenuity he would find that by employing technical skill in composition he could let both parties have their own way, and at the same time mutually assist each other. But what suits the pianoforte does not always suit other instruments, and the composer who starts at the pianoforte will find the balance of his accompaniments disastrously distorted when he comes to score them for an orchestra or for

small chamber-combination. For the strings are more evasive than the pianoforte, the wind instruments more outspoken; the pianoforte has the advantage in its initial "kick" to each note, but the other instruments have what the pianoforte lacks entirely, continuous driving power. The difference, therefore, which musicians often suppose to be a mere question of "colour," is in reality a difference of rhythmic principle, and thereby one which touches the ultimate fundamentals of musical composition.

Mr. Corder was quite right when he urged the young composer to cultivate variety of rhythm. The German composer has had to become a slave to the born fiddler, because his language is so monotonous in rhythm that only a Goethe can achieve rhythmical ingenuity with it; that is why German music is predominantly instrumental, and why, in spite of all the rhythmic energies of instrumental influence from its Eastern neighbours, it moves for the most part in straightforward common time. Our English composers have done right, notwithstanding all that foreign critics have said of our music in the past, to stick to singing as the source of their inspiration. The singing voice, directed by our own poetry, can give us varieties of rhythm perhaps more subtle than any which occur to the born fiddler. But our musicians, if they are to make any progress in this direction, must acquire more knowledge, more willingness to look at problems intellectually and scientifically. Abt Vogler said "we musicians know!" The reverend gentleman was notoriously one of the great charlatans of music.

EDWARD J. DENT.

THE PLAYER-PIANO

FIFTEEN years ago the player-piano arrived at perfection. It had been improving steadily during the preceding ten years or so. In the beginning of the century musicians, like Grieg and Paderewski, had identified themselves with the Welte-Mignon Electrical Reproducing Piano, which is essentially the same as a player-piano, by playing into its recording machinery, and they extended their approval to the true player-piano. It seems, indeed, that by the year 1910 hardly a European musician of note had failed to recognise that it was an instrument of music, not a machine.

Novelty and the approval of composers and concert performers combined to make the instrument popular in the best sense; and simultaneously with its arrival at perfection it reached a golden prosperity.

A few high-minded enthusiasts in this country began to devote themselves more or less entirely to the cult of the player-piano: they naturally made much of the old tags that it was a facile means of learning a great deal about music, that it was a convenience in musical education, and the like; but chiefly they worked to bring the player-piano forward in the musical world as an instrument for the personal performance of music. To this end they laboured to discover and formulate the principles of the technique of "player-pianism," so that the instrument should become one of that band which ranges from the organ to the violin. (I say *they*; but it would be more correct if the pronoun were not of the plural number, as regards Great Britain, for Mr. Frederick H. Evans, the unwearying advocate of a certain radical change in the mechanism, was the only player-pianist who, around this peak year of 1910, strove to expound publicly the science of his art.) Being pioneer work, it, of course, met with ridicule; and being pioneer work in ambiguous circumstances, the ridicule found plenty of sensitive places into which to dart its sting. This, however, mattered little, and it would have contributed nothing to the causes which, a few years after 1910, brought about a serious barren spell in the world of the player-piano. For the player-piano has for a long time been under a cloud—commercially, aesthetically, academically, and publicly. There is now a sign, scarcely bigger than a man's hand, that the cloud is being puffed away; and the sign is watched with interest by those who for

fifteen years refused to believe that the sun never shone, and who continued to do their duty by the matter.

The lack of interest was among musical amateurs and musical professionals. The opposition was among manufacturers and dealers, and again among amateurs and professionals. Amateurs did not want the trouble of learning to play a musical instrument; dealers did not want it to be understood that this particular instrument required study. Professionals did not care to undertake the troublesome task of analysing a new phase of art, and so they remained ignorant of it; being ignorant, they either ignored it or opposed it. In the amateur world again, strong opposition came from gramophonists and from music-lovers who form the audiences at what since the war we have called "Celebrity Concerts."

In the business world a further opposition grew of a nervousness that is easy enough to understand; while pianoforte manufacturers, makers of gramophones, and the like, and dealers generally, have organised themselves into bodies for a common propaganda, makers of players and of music rolls have not so organised themselves; consequently where we can safely speak of the Steinway, Blüthner, Bechstein, Chappell, etc., pianos, we cannot safely speak of the Hupfeld, Pianola, Welte-Mignon, Angelus, Triumph-Auto, etc., players, because each is a self-centred entity, jostled about by its competitors in the commercial world, and so inevitably forced to obscure matters in order to direct an exclusive attention upon itself. This may appear a curious statement; yet it is a fact that even to-day one can hardly refer publicly to a particular player-piano without the atmosphere becoming charged with the awkward feeling that attends being-out-of-order and doing-what-isn't-done: thus I can say that the Steinway and the Bechstein are the finest pianos in the world, but I cannot say the Pianola is the finest player, or the Hupfeld, or the Welte-Mignon, or the Higel, without being accused of interest and bias.

I must remark that the Aeolian Company (formerly the Orchestral Company) seem never to have allowed this general nervousness to touch them. Their policy was based, in part at least, on recognition of the fact that the player-piano belongs to the high world of art; and the directors, in particular Mr. G. W. F. Reed, made it clear that they understood this simple philosophy, that what was good for all was good in right measure for the individual. . . . It is hardly necessary for me to say that I have not had personal intercourse with *all* makers of instruments and music-rolls, and that I am merely recording my impression of a general mood: yet I may mention that in 1912 I spoke on player-piano matters at the Music Trades Convention held at Brighton, this being "the first time the player-

piano had been seriously discussed at a Conference addressed by musicians," and that I spoke again on the subject at the meeting of the Federation of British Music Industries held at Buxton in 1923, without on either occasion feeling that it was surrounded by the large, generous, genial air that surrounds other similar subjects.

Perhaps before long makers of player-pianos and of music-rolls will form a body for common propaganda; and I suggest that they should seriously discuss doing so at the next Conference of their Federation. It is certain that until they do work thus together, the matter will remain obscure in the minds of the public, with all the resulting discomfort: a person is content to buy a £100 piano, and would laugh to be told that his purchase is as good as, or better than, a £250 piano; what we require is that in the case of the player-piano the person should likewise know that a £125 instrument is naturally different from a £400 one.

The varied kinds of opposition still maintained by musicians rise from lack of knowledge of the matter. The opponents do not know what player-piano art is. Perhaps they are not altogether to be blamed, because that art is not yet widely practised, nor, indeed, is it finally determined.

The recitals habitué of 1910 knew a good deal about the art of the piano. He knew its beauty and power, the rich individuality of the virtuoso and his sure technique, the nature of certain forms of piano music, and in particular the impressions received from perfect performance. Quite naturally he objected to a burlesque imitation offered by persons of no musical ability treading an "automatic" machine. But it is curious that he was not influenced by the expressed approval of his great virtuoso pianists, and induced thereby to an open-minded examination of the matter—he based his opposition on experience of the art of Sauer, Chaminade, Saint-Saëns, Pachmann, Rosenthal, Hambourg, Moszkowski, d'Albert, Backhaus, Leschetitzki, Paderewski, Sinding, Harold Bauer, Busoni, Sgambati, Carree, Dohnanyi, Josef Hofman, Arthur Friedheim, Lamond, Pugno, Gabrilowitsch, Godowski, Sapellnikoff, and others, and he never suspected that what they approved was probably something he had not yet met with: for we may be sure that if Paderewski played the player-piano to us, it would not sound as it does when played by a salesman demonstrator or an amateur unable to mark cross-rhythms or to say whether a piece is in 6-8 time or 8-4.

The gramophonist of to-day honestly objects to the player-piano, and with equal justification, but still with equal ignorance of the true facts. His opposition is based partly on fear of rivalry. There is, however, so fundamental a difference between gramophone and player-piano that questions of rivalry and even of intercourse hardly

exist. The gramophonist is as a concert habitué, the player-pianist as a performer of music.

The true gramophonist loves a good performance, whatever the music played: a year ago the most famous member of the gramophone world wrote:—"I think that we gramophonists are a bit too tolerant, you know. I feel that since I devoted some of my time to the player-piano I have certainly become more exacting in my judgments of sound-boxes. The piano is a fine bracer of one's ears after too entire an absorption in the world of gramophone sound." Mr. Compton Mackenzie, from whom I quote, intimates that before he took up the player-piano he was more or less uncritical of music, interpretation, and reproduction, and that the labour of personally producing music at the other instrument stimulated his critical faculties. But gramophonists of less fine a mind do not want that stimulation, and they consequently scorn the means whereby their leader in this country secured it.

Mr. Compton Mackenzie, however, held the wrong attitude. He regarded the player-piano as a relief from the gramophone, or at best as something supplementary to it. For he says further:—"And if only for the pleasure of coming back to the gramophone as one comes back from cigars to a pipe, all who can should indulge in playing upon a player-piano." Cigars are high-brow and classy, pipes homely, companionable, and unbuttoned; therefore the player-piano is a dress-suit affair.

When I read these pronouncements, I gave the speaker twelve months in which to tire of the player-piano, for the attitude revealed is that maintained, in one degree or another, by the average music-loving public, and it has been one of the main causes in the decay of player-pianism since 1910: it has been found that the majority of people cease to use their instrument after a year or two, because they can make no advance. It was in May, 1924, that Mr. Compton Mackenzie, fresh with the first joy of his Blüthner-Carola, spoke as above; and it was in March, 1925, that a close acquaintance of his said to me that he had not, after all, taken to it as he hoped he would.

With the gramophone and all performance made by other persons, we are listeners and observers; with the player-piano we are doers: the two states of mind are worlds apart. Up to a point, the player-piano is a self-operating machine, like the gramophone. Hundreds of compositions are well within its ordinary capacity to make sounds in correct time and rhythm: "Believe me," said Mr. Compton Mackenzie, "half-a-dozen performances will make you as vain of your prowess as golfing neophytes." They will do this, if your pieces are from Liszt, Moszkowski, and Chaminade, and if your rolls

are the "Artist" roll I shall describe in a moment; but your next half-dozen performances will shatter your pride and disgust you if your pieces are intricately modern (Albéniz, Debussy, Ravel, Scriabine) or complexly rhythmical, with changing times and involved rhythms; for the natural capacity of the player-piano operates in inverse ratio, and the more the music departs from a banjo-beat the more the instrument distorts it, until in the case of a simple piece like the Brahms *Capriccio* in D minor, Op. 116, No. 1, you require a mental power equal to the digital power required by the pianist for such a work as the *Islamey* of Balakirew, and in the case of a piece like the *Jeréz* of Albéniz, you require the same skill as that required by the singers of the *Christe eleison* in the Bach B minor Mass.

Clearly, then, the essential art of the player-piano lies beyond its natural capacity to make lovely sound with but a listener's labour on our own part; and as it is an admitted truth that the further we go into art the heavier the demand on us for work, it is inevitable that the amateur who starts with the wrong point of view will quickly become confused, and so quickly give the instrument up. The lesson of the organ is the same: no instrument makes such impressive effects with so little labour, but no instrument demands in the end so finely intellectual a control; whence it follows that no more than one per cent. of the young people who set out to be organists become masters of their art.

I would advise amateurs who are debating whether or no to take up the player-piano to analyse their interest in music, and only to determine on purchase if they believe themselves desirous of becoming students of music and musical performance. If it is piano music they want, they can still buy one of the exquisite electrical reproducing pianos, with regard to which Paderewski says that when listening to his own performances he receives the same sensations as when actually playing the music himself.

Yet recent developments in the player-piano have done so much to simplify the task of playing comparatively advanced music, that ordinary music-lovers can now go further in the art without laborious pains than was possible in 1910. But these developments do not take us into the higher range of the pure art of the player-piano, which remains exactly as it was fifteen years ago; and the developments are but modifications and approximations of an original which alone contents the artist permanently.

Some fifteen to twenty years ago Mrs. Curwen sat at a player-piano, and her experience was summed up in the phrase that she found herself "horribly at the mercy of the demon." She could

do nothing to control the operation of the machine. In February Miss Mabel Chamberlain, editor of the *School-Music Review*, listened (apparently for the first time) to a player-piano performance at the Aeolian Hall, and was surprised at the control maintained by the "operator," Mr. Reginald Reynolds. Mr. Lloyd Osbourne, the author, wrote in 1922 that his experience ultimately proved to him that "the actual mechanical rendition is so little absolute, that it is susceptible of extraordinary refinements of tone and phrasing."

The essential in an art of musical performance is direct association, or touch: the instrument is an extension of the body, a part of the performer; and the closer the connection the more perfect is the touch. Without direct touch, we cannot command; when the instrument refuses to be commanded, as in the case of the street-piano, it is not a tool or instrument, but a machine.

Touch for the player-pianist is effected through the feet, and what he commands is the pneumatic mechanism between the pedals or treadles and the pianoforte action. Any contrivance that intervenes between the pedalling and the pianoforte action obviously takes personal control, or touch, away from the player-pianist: the motive power ceases to be tactile; the same degree of mechanically-controlled power is directed to the pianoforte action, and whatever the pedalling and whoever the pedallist, the tone remains uniform, as in the stopped pipe of an organ.

Now, since (when one is playing on "direct touch") the entire range of the pianoforte is open to the same motive power, it follows that all notes struck at a certain moment are struck with the same force: yet an expert technical performer, that is, a player-piano virtuoso, can so provide power that a certain note of a well-spread chord shall be actually louder in effect than its companions. It would take too long to explain here how this is done, or the conditions that make it possible, and it will be sufficient to say that a short accentual pedal-stroke will mark a high treble note more than it will mark a companion note in the tenor, and that a simultaneous use of the dampers-lever (the "loud pedal" of the piano) with the accentual stroke will enforce a tenor or bass note more than the companion high note in the treble. Therefore the art of the player-piano rests with the pedalling, which, as is always the case with musical performance, has to be rhythmical—that is, a reflection of the motives and phrases of the music.

In certain players, and especially in the Pianola and the Hupfeld Solophonola, the motive power exhausts itself rapidly, so that the performer can deliver a stroke against a single note or chord, making a *sforzato* amid a prevailing *piano* or *forte*. This is the key-detail

of the player-pianist's technique; and with a good instrument and a perfect knowledge of music, he can create, on open pedalling, or direct touch, those syncopated accents of Mozart, for example, which elevate the even above the odd numbered quavers of the phrase.

But in some other players the exhaust is not rapid; and in all players there are conditions of close accent where the exhaust is not rapid enough for even the most skilful virtuoso to elevate one note only: he can see to it that the note before the accent is not loud, but he cannot make the note following soft, because the motive power thrust into the mechanism extends beyond the moment containing the accent. He therefore uses the Dynamic Control appliance which automatically deflects power, so that only enough power is transmitted to make a note just sound: this appliance is called the Control Levers or Control Buttons.

Moreover, when a melody and its accompaniment are closely interwoven, he may not be able to make the melody prominent on direct touch or open pedalling; and so he has again to use the Control Levers to deflect power from the subordinate notes, the roll maker assisting him by so planning the perforations that those making the melody are free of that automatic dynamic control: rolls thus treated are said to be *Themodised*, *Soloised*, *Melodised*, *Accentuated*, and so forth.

Let it be understood that notes in the charge of the Dynamic Controls are no longer in the charge of the performer; he cannot by pedalling make them louder or softer, because he is not in touch with them: consequently all notes thus automatically controlled are reduced to a common dull level of tone, and the performer has to render them artistic by constantly releasing power into the mechanism, at the right moment making a *crescendo* or a *diminuendo*. This release is conditioned by the facts, first, that the Dynamic Controls are graduated, and secondly, that at a certain point the mechanism and the performer are again in direct relation, the performer being in touch with the mechanism.

Here is delicate work, which is associated with delicate accentual and rhythmical pedalling, with the use of the levers or buttons for the loud and soft pedals, and with use of the Tempo Control mechanism for *accelerando* and *ritardando*. So delicate is the work that it is possible only for the virtuoso. When not made delicate in this manner, player-piano performance becomes dull or exaggerated or monotonous; amateurs tire of such performance, and listeners are wearied. An individual effects it according to his musicianship, his natural aptitude for the player-piano, and his acquired skill: he has to understand music, to know the composition as well as the pianist

who plays it from memory, and to be familiar with the particular instrument. One may have to practise a composition for twenty or thirty hours, and often one has to work from the printed score. Incidentally, I may remark that clever musicians are often startled to find that, the help of the reading eye abolished, they cannot tell from the perforations and the sounds the simple time of music : how impossible, then, becomes the position of the uneducated and inexperienced amateur, when his piece is not self-evident in time and rhythm !

Up to 1910 it seems to have been taught that all performance must be carried on by an expressionless and uniform pedalling, the purpose of which was to provide a steady driving power and so a common *forte*, the changes from loud to soft being brought about by use of the Dynamic Control appliance. This was the simpler way, requiring only attention to the directions given in the music roll ; it made possible the sale of instruments to persons of mediocre musical intelligence, and even to-day it is retained by many salesmen and dealers : I have already shown how the deceit has recoiled upon the deceivers, bringing about the subsequent decay of general interest in the player-piano.

In order to modify the difficulties and ambiguities of performance, manufacturers during the past fifteen years have incorporated various devices into the instrument and its roll. The melodising is in a few cases made more refined, and the automatic employment of the loud-pedal lever is made more delicate.

Chiefly, however, the power is automatically controlled, and the music is not translated into perforations mathematically exact, but into perforations of varying length, so as to provide an expressive *rubato*.

The "rolle metronomique" gives us strict time, so that it can be played to the beating of a metronome. The "artist's roll" gives us free time, so that the varied hastenings and retardings of a concert-pianist are recorded. This is useful when the artist's free time is sensible, but not when his free time is erratic, because it obscures still further the time of the music : player-pianists, I should remind the reader, are not told the time of the music in the roll, nor are bar-lines and accent-marks given them. When it is remembered that the essence of musical rhythm is disturbed accent and cross-phraseing, a composer sometimes having as many marks of rhythm in a phrase as he has musical notes, it can be readily seen how an artist-roll may be quite unintelligible. Recorders of the standing of Paderewski, Backhaus, Bauer and Armbruster afford intelligible help, however, of those who work for the Aeolian

Company; and of those (many unnamed) who work for the German makers of rolls—the Welte-Mignon and the Hupfeld Animatic—all with whose work I am personally acquainted, afford the same intelligible help, the high average of musical intelligence in Germany and Austria reflecting itself here as elsewhere.

Yet with the Artist roll, as with the straight-cut roll, the player-pianist still has to be master of the time; he still has to pedal rhythmically: and it seems to me that this effort to help the player-pianist has but endangered the position in the amateur world, since it adds to the mental problems of the amateur. Moreover, it adds to his executive problems, for in player-pianism tone and time are inseparable, the player-pianist's *rubato* often being conditioned by his need to provide the right motive power; and so a fixed *rubato* in his roll may interfere with his pedalling. This matter is too complex to explain fully here.

The outstanding development is that which automatically operates the Dynamic Control. All the player-pianist has to do is to pedal with a certain expressiveness, though still rhythmically, and with the changing motive power that brings tonal nuances into loud tone.

The two instruments of this class with which I am acquainted are the foot-blown Duo-Art Pianola-Piano of the Aeolian Company and the Pedal-Electric Welte-Mignon Feurich Player-Piano of Steinway and Sons: the one costs about £250, the other about £400.

Briefly, these two instruments, to the pedalling of the performer, (1) cause all the notes to speak, (2) produce the *tempo rubato* of the recording pianist, (3) employ automatically the loud and soft pedals of the piano, (4) separate melody and accompaniment, (5) control the power for alternating passages of loud and soft, (6) effect *crescendos* and *decrescendos*, and (7) effect the same in the controlled and subdued accompaniment to a melody. In plain but disrespectful language, they render the player-piano fool-proof; but they take away in large measure the actual personal art of performance, and so they render it artist-proof as well. Yet the more advanced and powerful the music, the more remains for the player-pianist to do even in these miraculous contrivances: let the reader take the Welte roll 493, which contains Dohnanyi's performance of the Liszt *Fantasia and Fugue on BACH*, and play this on the above-mentioned Feurich Pedal-Electric, or the Duo-Art roll 6792, which contains Ignaz Friedman's performance of the Bach-Tausig *Toccata and Fugue* in D minor, and play it on a Pedal Duo-Art, and he will see that the technical requirements of the ordinary player-piano still persist.

The future of the player-piano will be conditioned by our general

understanding that the real thing—the instrument of music which opens the way for an art of performance entirely personal (within the natural limits of the case) to the performer—is the player-piano pure and simple and the straight-cut music-roll. The Electrical Reproducing Piano is often perfect, but it is of the order of the gramophone, only giving us something to listen to. The Foot-Pedal Reproducing Piano, again often perfect in its results, is a compromise, suitable mainly for elderly people (this especially with the Steinway Welte instrument, the pedals-action of which is light, yet astonishingly effective) or for music-lovers who have no desire to master a highly-technical art yet are not content with the bad effects of an unintelligently pedalled player. The secure popularity of the player-piano will be established when makers and dealers organise a general propaganda, and when the relative worth of different instruments is admitted. Its artistic position will be assured when professional musicians accept it for something further than a facile means to "Musical Appreciation," and when they study it, teach it, and perform music on it in public: the Royal College of Music, the Guildhall School of Music, and the Royal Academy of Music have, I understand, the electrical reproducing piano, but not the player-piano; and in no educational establishment is the latter included among the subjects taught.

Concert use of the player-piano is made awkward by the circumstance that a roll has to be rewound and the next one inserted, and this often compels a pause in the middle of a sonata movement—a roll cannot be longer than what the take-up spool will receive compactly; but the trouble here might be overcome by having two instruments on the platform, with an assistant to change the rolls, the performer moving from one instrument to the other: yet, after all, audiences would soon get used to the act of changing the roll even when one instrument only was employed, just as they have got used to the violinist adjusting the tuning of his fiddle between the movements of a sonata. Concert performance will for a time be hindered further by the fact that people still look on the performer as an "operator," and it is certain the player-pianist will never become a public idol, any more than the organist ever becomes one—the organ being for the average concert-goer more of a machine than an instrument.

After fifteen years of thought, study, and practice, I still find myself able to say that we have not yet elucidated the technical principles of this new means of musical performance. It is already clear that music must submit to certain modifications and compromises compelled by the nature of the instrument: it must, for example, allow a general *tempo rubato* to take under certain

conditions the place of local accent in the creation of rhythmical motives, and it must sacrifice some of the individuality of part-writing; we do not at first like modification and compromise, but in the long run we admit them, as we have admitted them in the case of violin, organ, and pianoforte.

Nor can I say that we have finally realised exactly what kind of music is most in agreement with the nature of the player-piano. We know that all facile "pianisms" are easy and effective and that all involved rhythms are difficult and sometimes doubtful, Liszt being almost self-playing and Brahms at times almost impossible; but within these limits is a vast field as yet undefined.

This vital matter will one day be attended to, and there will for certain be some surprises for us, for we still make the mistake of regarding the player-piano from the point of view of the pianoforte, which is as wrong as to read the organ in terms of the orchestra. When it first became the custom to play chamber music in very large halls, it was discovered that the quartets of Haydn and Mozart, written originally for small rooms and small audiences, went over better to an audience of two or three thousand people than the quartets of Tchaikovski, Brahms, and Dvorák, in despite of the circumstance that the latter are written with orchestral fullness; in the same way we shall probably learn that much of the music ideal for the pianist will be the reverse for the player-pianist. Casella, Malipiero, Stravinsky, Eugene Goossens, McEwen, Bantock, William Wallace, York Bowen, and a few other composers, have experimented in writing or arranging music for the player-piano, and in several instances they have realised effects which are exclusively the property of this instrument: the rolls are issued by the Aeolian Company. Yet some makes of player-piano will not accept the rolls, the mechanism refusing to respond to the demand imposed upon it, and none but a virtuoso player-pianist can perform them.

What is wanted is that a body of musicians shall study the art of player-pianism, with the seriousness they once devoted to the arts of the organ, violin, and piano, but with the different intelligence of explorers and experimenters, and that they shall collate and compare their discoveries, opinions, and experiences generally: from their work would arise material that would gradually shape itself into a science of the art.

I would stress the truth that until a musician has heard the player-piano played by a genuine musician who has developed a high technical proficiency, he has no material on which to base his judgment of the instrument. And I would further suggest that until he has heard several pianists and player-pianists performing on different

instruments behind a screen, and submitted himself to an examination as to who was who and which was which, a musician has no authority to condemn the art of the player-piano. A year or two ago the new Vincent violin was thus tested in the company of famous early Italian violins, and it was found that when mere sound was submitted to the mind, a musician could not say which was the finer make of violin. I believe that the player-piano is different from the pianoforte, and that eventually its art will move into a path belonging to itself; but at present we play it with thought of the pianoforte at the back of our minds, and we certainly listen with the same, and therefore the test I suggest is legitimate.

SYDNEY GREW.

THE TRAGEDY OF MEYERBEER—1791-1864

THERE is no more tragic figure in the history of music than that of Giacomo Meyerbeer. When he appeared the musical world was bright with such stars as Beethoven, Bellini and Weber, yet he outshone them all, and drew the world's attention to himself. Then, like a comet, his brilliance began to fade until, while all the world wondered, he disappeared into the darkness of oblivion, whence (if Fashion has a parabolic orbit), he may emerge in the year 2020.

What is the explanation of the rapid rise and fall of Meyerbeer? Parry suggests that his undoing was his ambition, "A pianist's career not appearing imposing enough for his aspirations, he conceived the notion of becoming an opera-composer." Doubtless he was ambitious, but if ambition was a vice in Meyerbeer, how shall we exculpate the undoubtedly great men whose ambitions have led them by way of a pianist's career into the more glorious career of a composer? Ambition may be the sin by which the angels fell, but it is no less the power by which mankind must rise, and it is to the ceaseless goading of ambition that our thanks are due for the work of Beethoven, Weber, Chopin and others. If it had been Meyerbeer's ambition to write music which would have satisfied his conscience all would have been well, but his ambition was, to quote Sir Leslie Stephen, "not to stir men's souls with profound thoughts, or to soften by some new harmonies the weary complaints of suffering humanity, but to startle the world by the splendid embodiment in sound of the most sumptuous dreams of a cultivated imagination."

Other critics have found that the cause of Meyerbeer's tremendous but short-lived popularity was his passion for effect, and effect at all costs. This is true, but it is only part of the greater truth that Meyerbeer was prepared to lose his soul to gain the whole world. How willingly would he have flung himself from a pinnacle of the Temple to gain the admiration of the multitude! How shamelessly did he cringe and crawl before the evil things of this world to secure for himself the kingdom of opera on which he had set his heart! He had, in fact, an insatiable appetite for admiration like that of a gourmand for cherries—never satisfied with the one he is eating, because he is looking to see whether the next one is not even larger

and more succulent than the last. The problem of Meyerbeer is, then, ethical rather than musical—the eternal problem of right and wrong.

To show the dependence of a composer's work upon his sense of ethical values requires a statement of certain well-worn truths. Ethically, a good man is not one who is ignorant of evil, but one who, knowing what is evil, prefers that which is good. To pretend to be ignorant of evil is the sign of a prig; to be actually ignorant of evil is a sign of extreme youth or of unutterable stupidity. Aesthetically, a good artist is not one who is ignorant of bad art, but one who, knowing what is bad, prefers that which is good. Beethoven was a good composer, not because he could not write bad music, but because he tried rigorously to exclude from his music all that was bad or insincere. To think that composers could not have written the popular songs of the day is to under-estimate their versatility and also their characters. They could have done so, but they preferred a nobler and more precarious livelihood. It must not be thought that composers of bad music were necessarily bad-minded men. They worshipped false ideals, but at least they were sincere in their worship. But not so Meyerbeer. He had a liberal education in all that was good; he had an ample income and with it a freedom from any dependence upon popularity; and yet with every opportunity of doing only that which was best, he set out deliberately to do that which in his heart of hearts he despised. Rossini and his school, for all their musical sins, at any rate wrote up to their lights; Meyerbeer, on the contrary, wrote down to his lights, down, alas! to the footlights. He slaved, toiled and starved himself to make his music fall to the level of the average intelligence. This statement requires some explanation.

In the equipment of every composer there should be, in addition to his harmonic, rhythmic and melodic sense, a performer-sense and an audience-sense. Some composers possess one, some composers possess the other; some possess both. The composers of the Elizabethan period are, almost without exception, strongly endowed with a performer-sense, but wholly deficient in an audience-sense. That is, they looked upon music as a social pleasure in which several performers met together to mingle their voices or their instrumental skill. They did not consider their music as something made upon a platform and listened to by a large concourse of people. Hence they made their music contrapuntal and their parts of equal interest. Each performer or singer enjoyed his part, and though the general effect was pleasing, that was the result rather than the purpose of the good part-writing. In the string fantasias of William Byrd, each

player has an enjoyable melodic line to play; these melodic lines cross and recross each other in pursuit of their melodic freedom, and the result is that though the players enjoy themselves, there is no definite single idea presented to the distant listener. For this reason Byrd and his school makes no appeal to the untrained listener, though to the student of such music the charm is endless, because the parts can be listened to severally or together.

Bach's music, too, is informed more by a performer-sense than by an audience-sense. True, many passages in his music make a great appeal to an audience, but that was because his ideas were sublime and his technique masterly. Handel, though possessing a delicate performer-sense, has, for the first time in history, a superb and undebased audience-sense. His choral technique is perfect from the individual point of view, yet he never loses sight of his main purpose, which was to make quite sure that the audience should hear exactly what he meant them to hear.

Beethoven has a fine audience-sense, and in his music we find many features wholly superfluous if the music were performed by one individual for his own enjoyment, but almost essential when a large audience has to be driven emotionally together. One such feature is the long dominant preparation for the return of a melody which is so notoriously characteristic of his music. Wearisome to the individual performer, its purpose in the concert-hall is quite clear. We almost hear the composer saying, "Listen, carefully; something important is going to happen. Listen, you there chattering at the back, and you dozing in that side-chair! Have I got all your attention? Right, now for my great pronouncement." Thus, in the ninth Symphony, the mysterious opening bars are devised to awaken the curiosity of a large audience, and when the theme arrives everything contributes to making its appeal irresistible. Similarly, the great crescendo which ushers in the Finale of the fifth Symphony is deliberately lengthened to make sure of catching the full attention of an audience, however great or apathetic. Brahms has, comparatively speaking, a poor audience-sense, while Liszt had a thoroughly debased audience-sense, and (now we return to our subject) so had Meyerbeer. Never for a moment did he forget the existence of his audience, which means that he was never divine fool enough to let his ideas run away with him. Anything born of the music which might prevent his original idea from making its intended effect must be ruthlessly expunged. Now Wagner, though he had a magnificent audience-sense, was frequently too interested in music *qua* music to consider the audience. Thus he spent upon the Mastersingers and Tristan as much care as would be necessary to the perfecting

of a string quartet, though he knew, none better, that in the theatre he would achieve a greater success by using bolder strokes, or, as a Cockney described a landscape painter at work, " slappin' it on lavish." Such truly admirable unworldly wisdom would have been impossible to Meyerbeer. Nothing likely to interfere with his main ideas was allowed. Harmonies so conventional that they never distract, accompaniments so transparent that they never obscure—such were the ideals of Meyerbeer.

If we wish for evidence to support this accusation let us take a brief glance at "The Huguenots." The prelude opens with "Ein' feste Burg," and we anticipate a fine specimen of pure music. When the chorale appears with contrapuntal accompaniment we feel that our hopes are to be fulfilled. Not so, however; the chance phrases of counterpoint might obscure the tune and weary the audience. Meyerbeer dabs on little harmonic flourishes, transmogrifying this lion-hearted tune into the semblance of a musical French-poodle. For a few bars he toys with the theme in a fairly promising fashion, and then, feeling that his pleasure-loving audience will be wearying of this, he throws his finer feelings to the wind (actually worse still, to the brass and percussion) and indulges in an *allegro molto* in which the stately chorale is made to caper like a country-dance, and in the sentiments of the Bishop of Rumtifoo :

" That is a length to which I trow
Old stately hymn-tunes cannot go."

Throughout this opera, and all his other works, this petty fear of not holding the attention of his audience induces him to insert senseless cadenzas into every number. A similar fear also frequently induces him to vulgarise his harmony and rhythm, as is so glaringly exemplified in the eighth number of the first act, where every form of commonplace, rhythmic and harmonic, is collected to make an instant appeal to the worst instincts of a crowd which is the true meaning of vulgarity.

But why did Meyerbeer, who proved himself in many scenes to be a supremely gifted music-dramatist, why did he allow himself these deplorable lapses into the commonplace? It is not that he had no sense of beauty or refinement, but because he was not in the true sense a great man, that is a man pre-eminently distinguished by an unmistakable quality of greatness—greatness of intellect, greatness of judgment, greatness of courage, greatness of sentiment. Though we can rightly apply the word "great" to Meyerbeer's intellect, not even

the most ardent admirer of his work could apply that epithet to his judgment, his courage or his sentiments.

For instance, his judgment of the relative values of temporal success or failure were those of a mean, pusillanimous—and oh! the delight of using a word in its revered, academic sense—a meticulous man.* Compare the attitudes of Beethoven and Meyerbeer towards their work. Beethoven worked assiduously to make his work good, and if it was not liked, his comment was “Never mind, they will like it some day.” Meyerbeer worked assiduously to make his work appear a success, and he was prepared to jump the life to come. Beethoven was spiritually brave, but Meyerbeer was a coward; Beethoven would have died fighting; but Meyerbeer would have made profitable terms with the enemy. Beethoven, though he disliked adverse criticism, faced it bravely, realising that the man who wishes to live in the public eye must be prepared to be abused in the public ear; Meyerbeer was inordinately greedy of praise and pathetically sensitive to censure, so much so that he was prepared to take any steps through whatever mud or dirt, to ensure a favourable reception.

Spiritual valour, the valour shown by Beethoven towards criticism, is the distinguishing feature of all men of eminence, whether they have been Prophets, Priests or Kings. Beethoven with other opportunities might have been a Napoleon, but we cannot imagine Meyerbeer as a Napoleon, though we may be sure that if he had been cast for a soldier he would never have died at St. Helena. Great men do not always reveal their greatness, having a habit of appearing very much like ordinary men until some trifling incident reveals their immeasurable superiority. The reason why Beethoven's, Bach's, Mozart's music is great is not because they are necessarily greater musicians than their fellows, but because their minds which find expression in music were great, noble and brave.

It is because Meyerbeer's courage and judgment were not those of a great man that he was prepared to barter his soul for a mess of admiration. But, acknowledging that Meyerbeer did gain the whole world in exchange for his soul, it argues that his soul was of some real value, for the world as a rule gives nothing for nothing and precious little for sixpence. What then were those valuable qualities which Meyerbeer possessed and of which we rightly deplore the misuse?

Few men have had so many and such great natural gifts and few

* Since writing this paragraph I have come across Beethoven's opinion of Meyerbeer, as given in Thayer's “Life of Beethoven” :—“I was not at all satisfied with him (Meyerbeer); he struck the drum badly and was always behindhand . . . he hasn't the courage to hit a blow at the right time.”

could have used them worse. He had great technical facility; a fine sense of construction; a sensitive feeling for colour; and an uncanny power of expressing fear, horror, mystery and alarm. If Dr. Johnson is right in defining genius as an infinite capacity for taking pains then Meyerbeer was unquestionably a genius. The result of this infinite capacity for taking pains is clearly seen in his work. His operas have a sustained, a varied, though rarely an elevated interest. His orchestration, perfected by a method of alternative treatments in multi-coloured inks, is always amazingly pertinent, clever, and, as the occasion demands, brilliant or sublime. Furthermore, he knew how to extract the last drop of effect from every tune which he wrote. Whenever we meet a new tune we can be certain that it will be shown to its more striking advantage before he has finished with it. It is impossible to play through the fourth act of "The Huguenots" without being carried away by the rhythm and rush of the music, and by a real curiosity to find out how the tunes will be finally presented: just as we read detective stories with breathless interest to discover how the omniscient detective will finally triumph.

There is a marked similarity in mental outlook between Meyerbeer and his literary contemporary, Wilkie Collins. Both men preferred to work at stories in which "what happens" is more important than "what is." This preference produces works of immediate but short-lived appeal, because our interest in what happens disappears with knowledge, but our interest in "what is" endures eternally. Meyerbeer's music will stir our curiosity but not our deeper emotions. To startle fools was one of his guiding principles, and he cared little about the spiritual value of his dramas, so long as they provided effective situations. To find such scenes he would range from Heaven to Hell, exclaiming with the baffled Juno "Flectere si nequeo Superos Acheronta movebo."

Continuing our survey of his talents, we must admit that his invention though of varying quality is undeniably copious and fresh; his light and vigorous songs being as admirable as his serious and tragic songs are detestable, *cf.* the spirited and obviously sincere canzona of Marcello "Piff, paff" (Hug: Act 1, No. 4), with the mawkish fabricated romance of Raoul which precedes it, "More fair than the spotless lily." Even his spirited melodies, however, scarcely touch the inner meaning of the words. Great praise has been showered upon the duet in the fourth act of "The Huguenots," by such words as "all is perfect"; but this is surely an exaggeration. The aria of Raoul "From this wild dream of love" is undoubtedly full of haste, but it is more the haste of a man rejoicing in his strength, than a

man trying to escape from some suspected terror. The melody is too openly harmonised (four bars in F minor, four bars in C major) to suggest frenzy or anxiety. Certainly it is not perfect in the sense that the arias in the "St Matthew Passion" are perfect. Nor is Valentine's song "Canst thou see my despair" the adequate expression of the words. True she sings of her despair and the stage direction is *Con voce supplichevole*, but expression marks no more create expression than the State introduction of summer-time brings warmth and flowers to the frozen countryside. Her aria then, despite the words, is so blithe and light-hearted that Raoul does not take her grief very seriously, which was stupid of him considering that he, too, was a Meyerbeerian creation.

Harmony, being a much more personal thing than melody, it follows that a composer's character is more easily detected through the former than the latter. Anyone, at a lucky venture, may discover a melody of great beauty, as anyone may discover a gem of great value (though he will probably reject it under the impression that it is only a pebble), but no one can produce a long, well harmonised piece of music by a stroke of luck! Harmony reveals a man's character as certainly as does his handwriting, consequently it is in his harmony that Meyerbeer reveals himself most fully both at his worst and his best. It is difficult to believe that the man who harmonised the tawdry flower-maiden chorus is the same man who wrote the superbly dramatic close to the "Benediction" when over the final cadence of the soloists in E flat major he superimposes the chorale "Ein' feste Burg" in the key of B major.

Where Meyerbeer is at his best is in his control of choral effects and here he is surpassed by no one. Never for a moment is the central idea obscured, nor is effect ever sacrificed to detail however ingenious the detail may be, *c.f.*, the treatment of the Quarrel Scene in the third act, or the Rataplan chorus which precedes it, and which is the god-parent of many of Sullivan's effects. In an entirely different style, though no less original, is the writing for unaccompanied voices in the ninety-first Psalm, which anticipated by about one hundred years many so-called modern effects.

With all these gifts he might have earned for himself an honourable and permanent place among the Immortals. He might have written the early Wagner operas, he might have anticipated "Aida": even now, branded as he is by the reproaches of many great critics, it is impossible to say how much he contributed to the work of Wagner, Verdi, and Saint-Saëns. Meyerbeer certainly introduced many operatic improvements which we associate with the name of Wagner.

And it may be that the ungrateful conduct of Wagner was prompted as much by professional jealousy as by artistic incompatibility of temperament. Why then is the ungrateful Wagner loved and the ill-used Meyerbeer hated? It is a repetition of the story of Jacob and Esau. Wagner, with all his faults, was an improver, an idealist, who dreamed dreams that ranged from earth to Heaven, while Meyerbeer, not valuing his gifts, sold his birthright for immediate success. Then at last in his closing years as he wrestled with his opera "*Africaine*," he tried to reclaim the splendid promise of his youth only to realise that he could find in his heart no place for repentance, though he sought it earnestly and diligently with the labour of five sorrow-laden years. That, perhaps, is the true tragedy of Meyerbeer.

A. E. BRENT SMITH.

JAZZ

It must be an enormous relief to non-musical people to realise that they may contemplate the art of music without being committed to think of either Beethoven or Wagner, Mendelssohn or Strauss. Jazz, the brisk art, the art which we all enjoy, carries with it no mental misgivings. The search for jazz has occupied many years, but it has been like gold washing; nothing has been found to be of any value until most has been swept away. That Wagner, Chopin and the majority of the Masters perished with the dross is to be lamented, but it could not be avoided. The sediment subsided and left clear, crystal jazz. Since jazz attracts its millions of enthusiasts and interests the most cultured minds, the reader might imagine that the possibilities it affords of furnishing an entirely new kind of musical genius with the means of making fresh masterpieces would be fully realised by potential symphonists and composers of the "realistic" school.

" Why do not our recognised composers interest themselves in this form of art, and write and publish the ideal jazz? " asks a correspondent in the *Musical Times*. " Is it not possible to write jazz music which combines the qualities of good dance music from the point of view of the dancer with that of good music from the point of view of the musician? " That correspondent echoed the sentiments of millions of people, for the knowledge that one may have the privilege of *dancing* to a five-hours' programme of real musical masterpieces for one-and-sixpence would be no mean argument in favour of an immediate world-wide search for a composer endowed with all the necessary gifts for turning out the ideal jazz. Those who think they know best call this art one of the current modes of expression, voicing the thought and the talk of modern times, creating fresh lines and tone shadows every day, playing pranks with the minds of millions of our fellow creatures.

The history of its evolution is as remarkable as its masterpieces are unique. Jazz, which is slowly losing itself in the halo of its glorified designation "symphonised-syncopation," was the outcome of ragtime, which began in its crudest form some thirty or forty years ago; but it is only thirteen or fourteen years since ragtime became the rage

of America and Europe, the lofty strains of "Hitchy-Koo," "Alexander's Ragtime Band," "Ragtime Cowboy Joe," and other pieces, together with the strange bodily contortions necessary to correct interpretations, which endear themselves to the hearts of all.

The music-halls were delighted with the innovation, for the songs about mothers-in-law and lasses from Yorkshire and Lancashire had been worn threadbare. What was most important, however, was that the novelty became a craze in the dance-halls. A languishing interest in the dying pastime of dancing was immediately revived. Large and sumptuous dance-palaces began to rise side by side with the cinemas. The Lancers and the Quadrilles, the Waltz and the Schottische were promptly cast aside in favour of the Bunny-hug, the Turkey-trot, the Tango, the Fox-trot, and a host of other strange movements. With the war came a craving among people for unconventional excitement, for novelty and childish entertainment. In ragtime they found an ideal means of forgetting cares and worries. The simplicity and the absurdity of it no doubt formed a very helpful antidote to the horrors of the battlefield.

To trace the early growth of ragtime, one must go back to the slavery days and follow its evolution from burlesque performances of negro spirituals. The spirituals themselves were negro conceptions of Christian hymns, and usually sprang into life, ready-made, from the heat of religious fervour during some meeting in church or in camp. Sometimes the inspiration would be picked up by a slave whilst waiting outside the "white" church for his master during service time; at other times they would result from concerted effort. All the authentic specimens have the fourth and seventh tones of the scale omitted, and the most striking peculiarity about them is the rhythm.

When Gettysburg and Chancellorsville decided the result of the American Civil War, and the "Year of Jubilee" of which the slaves had prayed and sung for so many years came at last, over four millions of bondmen were thrown on their own resources, without homes, money, education, and without ever having had the opportunity of learning self-reliance. The wonderful manner in which the people of the Northern States acquitted themselves of the stupendous task of caring for these poor mortals ranks as one of the most charitable achievements of all time. Old men could be seen bending over the same spelling books with their grandchildren; fathers would work all day to support their families and walk miles during the evening to attend night classes; young girls would ask to be beaten rather than be suspended from lessons.

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Missionaries made great strides, and their work, their generosity, and the enthusiasm which marked their efforts stand as landmarks in a wonderful series of events which, during the short space of twenty years, raised the humble, illiterate and down-trodden American negroes to a position never anticipated in their wildest dreams of freedom. One cannot altogether ignore the part played by the small band of singers who set out practically penniless to raise the sum of \$20,000 with which to further the work of their school, which became the first negro University.* Known as the Jubilee Singers, buffeted by fortune, refused cabin accommodation on the steamship lines, turned out of hotels, and suffering all manner of insults because of their colour, they returned home in triumph within three years, bringing with them \$100,000. During their travels they had sung their spirituals before the Queen of England and had gathered as guests round the table of her Prime Minister, Gladstone.

But such great movements have always their coarser element. The more depraved young negroes would often set ridiculous words to the tunes that had inspired so much fervour among their forefathers. For instance, with the pious promise contained in the following chorus :

" Poor Mona, you shall be free
When the good Lord sets us free."

a verse would be set :

" Sheep an' de goat were a-trottin' in the pasture,
Said the sheep to de goat, can you trot a lil faster;
Sheep fell down and skinned his shin,
O Lord-a-mercy how dat goat grin, grin."
Poor Mona, etc.

With a mockery of the actions which accompanied the spirituals, these burlesque imitations were in great demand at negro " rags " or festivities. Moreover, " orchestras " composed of an assortment of banjos, violins, jews-harps, tambourines, tin-whistles, saucepan lids, bones and accordions, soon became very popular among the negroes and then found favour at lower-class white entertainments, being known as " Crackajack " bands. The term " jazz " in its relation to music dates from about this time. " This band is certainly some jazz," was a fairly common expression at the time, and two dollars a

* The Fisk University.

night and unlimited quantities of beer always proved a strong attraction to the musicians.

In a short space of time an entirely new form of entertainment was evolved. The performers, naturally, had no knowledge of music, and played from ear, improvising where their memories failed them. The spirituals were soon distorted out of all recognition, and no doubt popular ballads and comic songs were "ragged" in a similar manner.

The success of jazz has been such that to-day it is exploited like a film dealing with immorality. "There is nothing to 'whistle' to-day," says the programme of the first concert given at the Queen's Hall by the Savoy Orpheans' Band. . . . The symphonised-syncopated melody of to-day is so subtle that it can be heard many, many times before it can be even partly committed to memory. It can be heard many more times than any other form of "popular" music that has yet been devised . . . again and again . . . without being tiring. It has the disadvantage that we can spend a full evening of great pleasure and excitement . . . and then by next morning we can recall no individual tune to mind.

Hail! the Gay Arts!
Symphonised-Syncopation!

It is doubtful whether the magic terrors of jazz will scare many people over here, although by exploiting to the utmost the fallacy that good music is beyond the mental capacity of the ordinary citizen, and by holding up jazz to the popular veneration as an art that can be understood so easily and enjoyed by all, no one will deny that large fortunes can be made by those who deal in this commodity. No competent critic has yet taken it seriously, but the epithets hurled at it by the incompetent ones have been eagerly pounced upon and held up to popular ridicule. Some strange reason leads the jazz merchant to imagine that musical people look down with horror at his miracles. He turns round to them all in childish glee and points out his success. Chaliapin, in good humour, sets down a few bars of music on the back of a telegram . . . it is immediately sent to London, enlarged upon, "arranged" and held up for the admiration of the simple and the discomfiture of the "highbrows."

Where the European would write or speak with his tongue in his cheek, the American jazz purveyor disports himself in all seriousness. Take the following passage from the Savoy Orpheans programme . . . "Art, the passions above all, the ecstacies and sorrows . . . these still remain, at least for a pastime, in a world in which it is no

longer proposed solely to consider and calculate only the sterner issues. Is everything that breaks precedents, canons and other people's rules . . . bad? . . . Jazz demands the most infallibly possessed artists. With what appetite! With all the incredible enthusiasm of youth they sing to us of the delicious and swift and gay and trivial and shining things of life." An extract from one of these gay and shining things of life played at this concert is as follows:—



It is difficult to understand how "syncopation's past" merely anticipated the moment when the spirit not only of America, but of the whole world, would find in it perfect expression. It is plain to anyone with the slightest knowledge of jazz that the supposed "dislocation" of the beat, the "tossing to and fro" of the tempo and all the different kinds of "accent" implies nothing more than taking a puerile little tune written in common time and adopting the childish expedient of tying notes here, substituting quavers for crotchets there, adding accents and so on. The following extract from a Charleston-trot, a new "style" in which the rhythm is "tossed to and fro" more than in any other piece of jazz, will illustrate the meaning at once:—

Piano

Ex. 3

ritmato

(U. W. Sax - sustain)

D.S. al canto

N.B.—The signature has one sharp.

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Piano
3-

E.x.3

ritmato

P.W. Sax - auxiliary

D.S. al canto

N.B.—The signature has one sharp.

Surely if jazz composers wanted to reach the zenith of their powers they would give us, say, something in five-four, a few bars of three-four, some six-four and so forth, with all the various instruments playing in different time and in different keys, and so difficult in contrapuntal treatment that, although the result was satisfactory, only really live jazz musicians could play it? It seems that this favourable state of affairs will never come about; jazz is merely a question of experiment by musicians whose knowledge of the art of music is very limited indeed. The publicity expert does the rest. . . . "Jazz . . . sheer joy and expression in music . . . music which can hardly be whistled or ever sung, music which carries you up and gives voice to that love of life which is in every soul, but is so constantly unexpressed. Jazz lets no one stand still. Its melody and its rhythm are infallibly compelling." The composition of the modern jazz orchestra is worthy of comment. The banjos and tin-whistles have given way to the more cultured 'cello, harp, and other orchestral instruments. The best bands now employ two French horns, and, of course, the saxophone family and the Sousaphone. One or more pianos figure in every band and, together with the banjo, keep a steady accompaniment practically throughout as follows:—

Ex. 4

The musical score consists of two staves of piano music. The top staff is labeled "Patter" and the bottom staff is labeled "8th". Both staves are in common time (indicated by a "C") and use a treble clef. The top staff has a key signature of one sharp (F#). The bottom staff has a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The music is composed of eighth-note patterns. The top staff has a dynamic marking "p" (piano) and "8th" above the staff. The bottom staff has a dynamic marking "8th" above the staff. The music is divided into measures by vertical bar lines.

except in what are known as "novelty" choruses, where the piano may have to imitate a clock:—

E x 5

little old clock on the man-o'-war keeps tick-ing the time

way

or (where the chief weakness of jazz lies) at the end of the eighth or the sixteenth bar, where the melody always comes to a dead stop for a couple of bars. In good jazz one or more instruments fill in the gap by what is commonly known as a "break" . . . i.e., something that breaks the monotony.

The piano being one of the most important instruments in the jazz band, and practically indispensable, it is not surprising that a special tutor has been published for jazz pianists. Described as the "most amazing and masterly piano course ever offered to the American pianist . . ." the book has probably the circulation of a best seller among novels, and Mr. Zez Confrey, its remarkable author, composer of the famous piano pieces, "Kitten on the Keys," "Nickel in the Slot," "Coaxing the Piano," "Mississippi Shivers," etc., seeks to assist pianists to reach the height of their art. At the end of the work, when it is assumed that the pianist has mastered all the intricacies of the new art, the "Fisherman's Horn-pipe" for the right hand and "Yankee Doodle" for the left, is set out for performance; and later, for crossed hands, an extract from his "African Suite" for piano will bear out the statement regarding his book:—



No survey of this wonderful art would be complete without reference to the words which often accompany the music. The ragtimer usually preferred to hear songs about his mother in Dixie, or his sweet heart in Alabam, but the lover of symphonised-syncopation need have no such limitations set upon his muse. As his music is international, he has the privilege of leaving his heart in the middle of the Sahara :—

“ Somewhere in Sahara,
 Far across the Eastern Sea,
 Someone to me there is singing
 Love songs of Araby.
 My desert flow'r ev'ry hour I'm calling you,
 Calling you so true,
 Somewhere in Sahara,
 I have left my heart with you.”

Or, after leaving her for ever, he is at liberty to send her a refrain from Mandalay, as follows :—

“ Beneath the Burmese Moon
 I'll be there with you soon,
 Beside the Blue Lagoon,
 My love to you I'll croon.
 With love's sweetest tune
 I'll ride a wild typhoon
 To be in old Rangoon.
 I'm coming to you, I'm coming,
 There beneath the Burmese Moon.”

Poets have been classified as those of “ fine frenzy ” and those of “ fine natural gift.” An example of the latter species is as follows. An Arab Chieftain sings it to his bride while taking her away, surrounded by his band of faithful followers. Drunk with love's intoxication, and with legitimate poetic license, he borrows from the “ Indian Love Lyrics ” on the way :—

“ 'Neath Persian skies
 Where temples rise,
 You and I beside the Shalimar,
 In the sky read Fate in ev'ry star.
 Where blue birds nest
 There I'll find rest,
 Held enchanted by Pale Hands I love,
 'Neath Persian skies.”

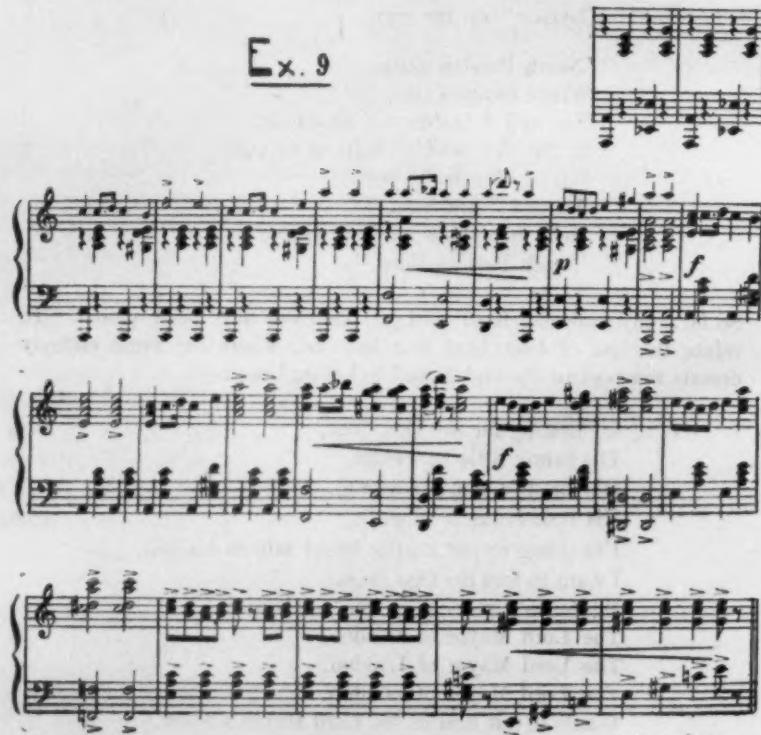
So far, only examples from good jazz choruses have been quoted. To refute the slur of bias, here is a bad one, where the muse entirely deserts the poet in the eighth and following lines :—

“ Im looking for the Ogo Pogo,
 The funny little Ogo Pogo,
 His mother was an earwig,
 His father was a whale,
 I'm going to put a little bit of salt on his tail.
 I want to find the Ogo Pogo,
 While he's playing on his old banjo;
 The Lord Mayor of London,
 The Lord Mayor of London,
 The Lord Mayor of London,
 Wants to put him in the Lord Mayor's Show.”

There are songs about sweethearts in China, in Japan, Honolulu, Havana, Hawaii; songs pathetically appealing to her not to creep into his heart while somebody else is there, and so on. No matter how good the music might be, no one could reasonably be expected to tolerate the association of such words with it.

Competent critics familiar with the performances of Mr. Paul Whiteman's orchestra and other well-known jazz combinations of instruments tell us that so standardised are the devices in use that ninety-nine pieces out of every hundred sound as if they had been written by the same man. Cross rhythms, combined rhythms and other sorts of rhythms appear remarkable to the jazz composer because his knowledge is so limited and his general education so negligible that what he writes in his ignorant simplicity seems to him to be remarkable new inventions; his conceit always blinds him to the limitations upon his abilities. A little tune, perhaps a caricature of a well-known masterpiece, accompanying chords alternately in tonic and dominant:

Ex. 9



1st CHORUS

Cor.

a "break" or two, a "novelty" chorus—and the latest jazz masterpiece is complete: a new lease is given to the liveliness and the rhythmic power of our lives.

As for the so-called tonal effects, there is no doubt that most of them were devised in the first place, not so much for their novelty as in order to disguise the diabolical tone produced by third-rate instrumentalists. It would probably be a harrowing experience to hear Mr. Paul Whiteman attempt a few bars of the Elgar "Violin Concerto" without his mute.

Crescendos and diminuendos are so foreign to jazz bands that even the Savoy Orpheans took pains to add reverently the adjective "symphonic" to them in their programme. "It was also found necessary," they said, "to use arrangements written by expert musicians, according to the old-established rules of music."

The worse the musician and the smaller his mind the better jazz exponent he can be relied upon to make. If he has no finer feelings, no inner musical perception, and if he has never heard good music at all, the greater will be his relish in burlesque performances of masterpieces; he values not so much the novelty of the burlesque as the feeling that respectable musicians are likely to shudder in horror at his apparent effrontery. The less the jazz musician knows of rhythm, melody, harmony, and all those subjects so necessary to a correct understanding of the art of music, the more he will be convinced that of all forms in music, jazz is by far the greatest, because its prime asset is to offend all rules of decency. It is questionable whether any of the jazz composers would have broken the "rules" and "canons" of music had they known anything about them. Indeed,

the leading jazz composers pride themselves on their ignorance of music.

No one jazz piece ever retains its popularity for more than eight or nine months. Every year brings the same shoal of "hits" and "latest successes," and as one tune fades from sheer anaemia, another rapidly takes its place. That, of course, is the fate of all bad music, just as it is the fate of good music to live for all time; it only ceases to be the music of an age or period when it comes to be the music of centuries.

Tennyson held that real poetry should mean many things at once. It is so with music. A really great composer has something of the best to say for every man, the scholar, the artist, the lover, the mourner, the man in the street and the man in the field. Even painters, they say, are sometimes able to aspire to the same lofty heights. Gainsborough once strolled into Reynold's studio in a carping mood, but on looking round, was forced to mutter "the beggar's so various." The critic might admit the same of every great composer. The hall mark of real music is its idealism and its purity, its truth and its fidelity. The hall mark of all great art is its honest sincerity. But jazz is neither ideal nor pure, neither is it sincere. It is faithful to nothing, an "art" without parents and without relations. No character or sentiment has ever been depicted by it. No jazz wonder-piece has ever contained even in its whole length the least inkling of that far sweeping philosophy that Beethoven often condensed in a few bars.

Truth to tell, there is no affection for jazz in this country. Beneath the outward and inevitable materialism of the times, there is a real craving in millions of hearts for finer ideals in life and true conceptions of what is best in art. It is unfortunate that so many people have an utterly shallow and false sense of values and are unable to distinguish between good art and bad. At the same time, it is doubtful whether the percentage of these people is any higher than it has always been. Jazz thrives because the world is larger, and because there is more room for the humbugs who like to be in the limelight and play to the gallery. They exist because we live in a more leisured age, and in spite of industrial upheavals and unemployment, people spend far more money on entertainment than they did a decade ago. Perhaps in time many will learn to differentiate between the true art and the false, and what will happen to the stuffed scarecrow, jazz, probably long before that happy day dawns, hardly requires comment.

CECIL AUSTIN.

"AT THE BOAR'S HEAD"

THERE appears to be still a certain amount of scepticism as regards opera and its future in Great Britain. Some believe that opera is alien to the British temperament and cannot take root here, or, at best, flourishes like a hothouse plant; others that opera is best under festival conditions and should only be given once a year, like a village fair—*olim in anno licet insanire*. That opera has survived the notorious difficulties that have beset it for nearly a century in this country seems to prove that its appeal is a reality. It is incredible, otherwise, that a public could be found to support such wholly inadequate experiments as we have ourselves witnessed in great provincial cities before the coming of the Beecham Company. There are, moreover, other signs which encourage the belief that opera is gaining ground, and the most important of these is the number of British operas written in the last few years. "The Boatswain's Mate," "The Immortal Hour," "Hugh the Drover," "The Perfect Fool," testify that composers at least do not believe that the future of opera in this country is hopeless.

A little while ago Mr. Gustav Holst added another one-act opera to his credit—"At the Boar's Head"—founded on various scenes from Shakespeare with "Falstaff" as the central figure.

"At the Boar's Head" had a very cordial reception in Manchester where it was first produced, and the verdict has been endorsed recently by a London audience at the Golder's Green Hippodrome. The system adopted by the composer is new and daring for all its apparent simplicity. We are told that during days of sickness Mr. Holst solaced himself by the alternate reading of Henry IV. and of Playford's and other collections of folk tunes. The result is a one-act opera built on tunes derived from "Chappell's History of Popular Music in England," "Country Dance Tunes," edited by Cecil Sharp, "Morris Dance Tunes"—also in Cecil Sharp's edition—and "Folk Songs," collected by the late G. B. Gardiner—some forty tunes in all, to which must be added a few tunes of his creation. Such a system might easily have ended in failure. To compress forty tunes of equal worth in a single act is not an experiment that should be lightly undertaken. Moreover the effect that music has on words is to expand and widen the thought. No matter how speedy the rhythm of music, its pace is always slower than that of the word.

One can read a whole libretto in the time it takes to play half an act. Hence the need to reduce the text to its bare bones.

Mr. Holst has disregarded this principle out of respect for Shakespeare's text, and has set other limits to his own tasks animated by the same desire that not a word of the original should be changed. He has chosen folk melodies which glide along so easily that one is hardly ever conscious that a word is tied to a note. Occasionally one meets a passage where the conflicting claims of word and music stand out. "Wherein is he good, but to taste sack and drink it? Wherein neat and cleanly, but to carve a capon and eat it? Wherein cunning, but in craft? Wherein crafty, but in villainy? Wherein villainous, but in all things? Wherein worthy, but in nothing?" This passage is better spoken than sung. In reading, the words gather speed as the passage proceeds. The sentences become shorter. The effect of the questions: "Wherein crafty" and "wherein villainous," coming on the heels of the assertions that Falstaff is crafty and villainous, brings the sentences still closer together until they achieve the two final blows:—Falstaff is villainous in all things and worthy in nothing. Mr. Holst has done something to convey this effect in music. "Wherein" is represented, musically, at first by crotchet and quaver and later by two quavers. This is something, but not quite enough. The 6-8 rhythm, for all its swinging gait, lacks flexibility; the notes hold back the speed of the words. But, on the whole, moments when one is conscious of a retarding effect are few. On the other hand, the musician's privilege to combine voices and express at the same time more than one thought, stands Mr. Holst in good stead. The quintet where the Hostess, the Prince and Poins sing: "Devouring time, blunt thou the lion's paws," while Doll Tearsheet and Falstaff join in with: "When Arthur first in Court began," is not only a clever but an exceedingly effective piece of writing.

Mr. Holst's aim generally seems to have been to make the word bear the very lightest of musical burdens. Music, for once, is distinctly the handmaiden of the text, her chief merit that of carrying along as on soft wings the golden words of the poet.

Accordingly the orchestra is much below the usual strength, and consists of one piccolo, one flute, one oboe, one English horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, tuba, timpani and strings. This can be reduced still further, the parts of the English horn and tuba having been "cued in" by the composer himself. There are large tracts in which the orchestra has little or no part. The opening is for voices unaccompanied; so is part of the quintet. Recitative on one chord, unaccompanied or even spoken, is of perhaps unique frequency in a one-act opera. It is an orchestra which gives

some support, but cannot claim to contribute to the stage action. Its function is so modest that when the opera was first performed in Manchester, someone was heard to ask what had happened to the orchestra. The remark shows how patent was the difference between Mr. Holst's orchestration here and that of any other opera, including his own "*Perfect Fool*."

The impression left by the performance was, on the whole, very pleasant. Mr. Holst deals very deftly with these folk tunes for the reason that folk tunes are part of his own individuality and temperament. He has given the freedom of the folk song to the unusual measures of the ballet music in "*The Perfect Fool*." In "*The Planets*" Jupiter sings what is essentially a folk melody. In "*At the Boar's Head*" these fresh melodies accompany the words with ease and grace; we pass from the one to the other without becoming aware that one ends and the other begins. Indeed, for all his reverence for Shakespeare, Mr. Holst could not but make what in the play is a grave and serious matter a background for comedy. Even in the best scene when, the old King ill at Westminster, Prince Henry leaves Eastcheap and his friends to join the army marching against Douglas, Hotspur and Glendower, all sense of danger seems to be lost in the merry marching measures of this orchestra.

"*At the Boar's Head*" is a considerable achievement, and it cannot be adequately appraised without reference to the problems which confronted the composer. Prose may have in itself no obstacle to music. Rather is it a challenge, all the more so if we wish to deal deferentially with its "*finer harmony*." Sentences with a perfectly clear if not long sustained rhythm abound in the present text: ". . . that's past praying for—for I have peppered two of them. Two, I am sure, I have paid; two rogues in buckram suits . . . Thon knowest my old ward;—here I lay, and thus I bore my point."

In this passage the rhythm of the music is already mapped out as clearly and as unmistakably as in any measure of poetry. And such examples are many. Real difficulties are, however, encountered when we consider the character of the comedy and its author.

Shakespeare is a magnet who attracts musicians. In the setting of him a foreigner using a translation would seem to be at considerable advantage over an Englishman working on the original. A translation, however able, may be altered with no sense of impropriety. The actual sounds of the original are already gone. To hold, in a translation for a short while, the original rhythm, is considered, and it is, an achievement. But when we are dealing with the original text we find that the expression is often final. The

sounds of great poetry are so welded to the ideas that any attempt to separate the two must be hazardous. What music can fitly replace the cadence of such words as the concluding sentences of Othello, or of famous passages in "Hamlet" or "The Tempest"? It is not only a question of words and expression, but of actual "sound"—not sound which merely pleases our ears, but sound which—no matter from whose mouth it comes—we feel to be appropriate. To impose another set of sounds on those found in supremely fine examples of dramatic poetry may not be impiety or desecration, but it is certainly great daring.

As we have seen, Mr. Holst's general reverence for Shakespeare checked him over this particular work. In "At the Boar's Head" he is no longer the bold, adventurous artist of "The Planets" and "The Hymn of Jesus"—the text is no longer tragedy but comedy. Instead of great thoughts, it abounds in wit of the first order. Wit is the soul of these scenes—the soul and the body, for the "action" is all but negligible. Until the coming of Pistol and the quarrel with Doll Tearsheet, there is no "action" of any kind, but the relation of an adventure which interests us in so far as the telling of it reveals the character of Falstaff, and the dialogue between the Prince and Falstaff in which first the Prince, and then Falstaff, pretends to be the old King.

Wit, of course, is the word; the quick flash of repartee; the thrust and parry in hot argument; the capping of one joke by another and, in the case of Falstaff, of one wild flight of imagination by another. Mr. Holst, then, had no need to fear that his music should offer us pebbles for jewels. But he had another enemy, the slow pace of music. A necessary condition of wit is speed. All men could be witty if they had enough time to think out and polish their sayings. If they are not, it is because their replies are not in time. Most of us are like the duellist who remembers the right counter after he has been laid low by a quicker opponent.

How then can music be forced to hasten without giving the impression of hurry; how can it keep pace with a nimble text? Mr. Holst has chosen folk songs because there a great wealth of material lay ready at hand which could be accepted or set aside according to its ability to keep in step with the thoughts. He selected from a great number those which he considered would best fit the theme—tunes which would run along smoothly and discreetly. We were not, at that performance, conscious that the music had a retarding effect except in the scene just mentioned. Here, to our thinking, there was a dangerous slowing down of speed; every jest of Falstaff seemed then to misfire. This is not a radical fault and did not impair in the least the success of the opera. Every new work has its "ups" and

"downs," and the important question is whether the "ups" outnumber the "downs." They do so, decidedly in the case of "At the Boar's Head." But the scene we have instanced was, decidedly, the least happily inspired.

These innovations of Mr. Holst cast a new burden on the shoulders of his interpreters. You cannot give so predominating a part to the word and so modest a part to the music without requiring the interpreter to be actor as well as singer. In the great love-duet of "Tristan" the words are of no importance—the emotional content is all in the music. But if music resigns her claims and the word becomes all important, the singer must use the word as effectively as the actor; he must study the facial expression and the gesture of the actor. The Manchester performance has been praised by all competent judges and must have been adequate in consequence. Each character was enacted by a very competent singer, and I know of no singer on whom my choice would sooner have fallen if I had been asked to name a likely Falstaff, than Mr. Norman Allin. Yet his interpretation failed completely to convince me. Some performances of the British National Opera Company in London have lately been particularly attractive because of the obvious care taken by all its members to pronounce words clearly and intelligently. Mr. Allin was probably no less careful in Manchester. But the occasion demanded very special care. In any average opera, if we miss one word in a dozen, we do not feel the loss and we praise the singers for accurate enunciation. In Mr. Holst's work such a loss may rob us of the key to a whole passage. Perhaps the first performance in this respect was good, but not quite good enough; performances may have improved considerably since. But the chief flaw in my opinion was the extraordinary solemnity of Mr. Allin's Falstaff.

No doubt the traditions of opera and the anxieties of a first performance had some share in this apparent misreading of the character. But it is certain that this and other matters will have to be changed if we are to see this opera in the right focus. It may mean nothing less than a readjustment of our notions as to what opera is or should be. Hitherto composers have spoken of giving poetry its just share, but when the time came to put their theory into practice they seldom hesitated to belie in deed their words. The unimpassioned music of the modern seems destined to bring about a real change of heart, and it may, after a period of trial, achieve a new and, possibly, more liberal union of music and poetry. When the art of Strauss degenerated it became pretty evident that for the time being it was useless to follow the paths marked out by the great composers of the last century.

Mr. Holst himself, with his strong dramatic instinct, apparently

can never be "wholly serious" in opera. He tried it in "Savitri" when his hand had not yet learnt its cunning ways. In "The Perfect Fool" he gives us fantastic comedy; in the last opera he takes discreetly the second place and gives the first to the poet. Whether this is solely the outcome of a sense of reverence for Shakespeare, or, in part, the result of the artist's quest for new ways we cannot, of course, at present, determine; and it would be useless to speculate what paths opera will follow in the next fifty years, for they must be mapped out by the composer possessing the strongest individuality. But Englishmen who mean to write for the theatre will do well to give some study and close attention to the requirements of the theatre. And the first of these is a suitable and effective libretto.

Success has been won and lost according to the aptitude or ineptitude of the libretto. "Tosca" may be said to owe its popularity to its libretto, which, crude as it is, yet possesses the raw material out of which good dramas are made. The great music of Beethoven and Weber has not alone sufficed to keep alive on the stage "Leonore" and "Euryanthe." The letters of Verdi are particularly instructive on this point. Verdi was wont to call a spade a spade, and he did not often condescend to discuss theories, but expressed himself with the blunt directness of the practised professional addressing a professional audience. He relied mainly on experience and instinct, but if we have not his unerring sense of measure, a little questioning may help us very considerably. After all, the basis of a good libretto is simple enough. It rests on two cardinal points: (1) an apt subject; (2) a construction which admits of musical treatment. A reservation may be made in the case of one-act operas, for although they will be the better for complying with such elementary principles, they may, because of their short duration, trespass with impunity where a three or four-act opera may not.

The real composer of opera both hears his music—during the act of composition—as it will sound when it is played by an orchestra and sung by the other performers, and sees the stage in his mind's eye, watching every movement and gesture. This faculty is mainly the result of observation and experience. It is found in some Italians, in greater or lesser degree, for the simple reason that for centuries music in Italy has meant opera, and all musicians have been connected in some way or other with the theatre. The comparative absence of all tradition in England may be a blessing or a curse. It will prove a blessing if it encourages composers to seek new fields wisely and cautiously; it may be a curse if it should urge them in their search to wander too far.

There is perhaps a danger in the great wealth and excellence of

English dramatic literature. One may easily imagine a composer drawn to a subject by its poetic splendour, or by the perfect proportions and its fitness as a drama. To love a theme passionately is one of the conditions of good composition—but only one. Verdi was long attracted by "King Lear," and for years thought of it as a possible text for opera. Yet he never showed more clearly his flair for musical drama than when he renounced it, having come to the conclusion that such a subject was not likely to make a good opera. This does not mean that "King Lear" will never make a good opera. But if this should happen we may be certain that the composer will command a very different style and resources from those of Verdi.

The experiment tried by Mr. Holst's latest opera would be materially impossible in the case of a whole play of Shakespeare, and we need not fear that the attempt will be made. Less scrupulous composers, however, have made use of Shakespeare's texts in much curtailed versions. There is nothing to be gained by such endeavours. To set to music "To be or not to be," or "The quality of mercy" is to court ridicule. These things have so long been associated in our mind solely with speech that we resent any other medium. It does not matter whether the music is good or bad. The slower pace, the pitch of the voice are enough to put us in a bad humour. The alternative adaptation is unthinkable. A much more promising field is that of fiction. "Joseph Andrews" or "Commodore Trunnon," the heroes of the picaresque novels of Smollett, should make as good texts for comedy in music as any. And the rearrangement of a novel would avoid the damaging comparisons inevitable in the rearrangement of poetic dramas.

Nothing is more promising than the way in which Mr. Holst, Dr. Vaughan Williams and Mr. Rutland Boughton have begun their careers as composers of opera. For they have avoided the worst pitfall—imitation. There is nothing to connect "The Perfect Fool," "Hugh the Drover," "The Immortal Hour" or "At the Boar's Head" with German, French or Italian opera. There is no point at which they resemble the work of others. They affect us in a different manner; they make for a different goal. The ability of these composers to attract and interest an audience has now been proved. It would be deplorable if such high promise were to be compromised by a step in the wrong direction. They must needs go the way their talents and inclinations point. Opera, however, depends for its success on so much that is not music, that we may be forgiven for insisting on this dependence in view of the price composers of unquestioned greatness have had to pay for ignoring it.

F. BONAVIA.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Arnold Schönberg. By Egon Wellesz. Translated by W. H. Kerridge. J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd. 5s. net.

Now that Debussy is recognised not only as a composer of genius but as an important factor in the evolution of music, one can safely say that Scriabin and Schönberg are the most controversial figures in modern music, with this difference, that Schönberg, being still alive, is the more hated, Scriabin simply the more condemned.

For the Austrian composer, poet, painter, teacher, historian and philosopher is a far greater and stronger personality than the Russian neurasthenic, dreamer and theosophist, to whom composing was rather a mystical than a purely musical act. As Cecil Gray says most aptly in one of the best essays of his brilliant but not a little paradoxical "Survey of Contemporary Music," "Whether one likes or dislikes his music, he remains one of the most vital forces and dominant personalities in contemporary art." And it is perhaps on the words "vital force" that the greatest stress should be laid. Controversial as his book on harmony may be, it is brimful of stimulating reflections. A passage such as the following, quoted by Wellesz, is well worth thinking over:—"How can we say: That sounds good or bad? Who is judge in this case? The authoritative theorist? He says, even if he does not justify his opinion, what he knows—that is to say, not what he has discovered for himself, but what he has learnt; or what everyone believes because it is everyone's experience. But beauty is not the experience of everyone, being at most only the experience of certain individuals. Above all, if such a judgment be allowed to stand without further justification, it must needs be of such an axiomatic nature as to be readily admissible."

A dangerous opinion undoubtedly, but more than once proved to be right in the course of the history of music. The corollary, of course, is that what the intuition of a genius creates is beauty, whether or not it is recognised as such by common consent, and that may be true enough, but the difficulty lies in being certain that the intuitive power which creates is that of a genius!

"Again, through the removal of the distinction between consonance and dissonance, says Wellesz (one of his pupils, by the way), theesthetic valuation, which has gradually been losing ground, of consonance as being beautiful and dissonance being ugly, disappears altogether. For if the distinction no longer exists, if dissonances are merely remote relations to the ground-tone, where does beauty end and ugliness begin?"

It must be borne in mind when considering these theories that the man who holds them has by no means shown himself incapable of writing "beautiful" music according to accepted canons. His sextet "Verklärte Nacht" might almost be called a pocket edition of Tristan, and the same can be said of the Gurre-Lieder, which in its striving after and often achieving the grandiose almost

out-Wagners Wagner. The fact is that Schönberg must have clearly perceived, as Debussy did from the outset, that on these lines no further progress was possible, and henceforth his efforts tend in the opposite direction: ever greater condensation, telescoping of chordal progressions, melodic lines compressed into chords, suppression of sequences. Later still he goes so far as to economise even on his thematic material, splitting it up into the smallest motives, reducing it to a mosaic to which the instruments shall lend colour and an imposing contrapuntal technique design. From the gigantic proportions of the *Gurre-Lieder* his orchestra shrinks to those of the chamber-orchestra in which every instrument stands on its own ground, seeks its own path. In the five orchestral pieces "the chords are formed from the most varied tone-colours, treated according to their natural intensity and within the chords themselves, certain tones are allowed to be more prominent than others" (p. 122). The third piece dispenses with thematic design altogether: it is pure sound pattern, the same chord being slightly but constantly altered orchestrally and harmonically. This work preceded by three years that extraordinary piece of self-ironisation, the *Pierrot Lunaire*. That represents, as Cecil Gray rightly says, the zenith of Schönberg's powers. With its speaking voice, its half a dozen instruments, its weird colour, its whimsical text, its intricate technical design, it is one of the most extraordinary manifestations of genius of modern times. It may be to some repellent, but it cannot fail to impress, so forceful is the personality that pervades it. It cannot be judged by any one feature, it must be considered as a one and indivisible whole, the curious chant of the words combining not only in sense but in sound with the peculiar "timbre" of the instruments. Singularly enough, Wellesz, while giving a fairly complete analysis of the *Pierrot*, and insisting especially on its wealth of scholastic formulæ—passacaglia, canons and double canons, inverted canons and what not—says very little of the genesis, and the inner meaning of the work, yet it is on this point that his information would have been most hopeful. But this is perhaps a somewhat carping criticism of a book which is extremely useful and comes, in the excellent English form which the translator has succeeded in giving to a by no means easy original text, at a moment when it is much needed.

L. D. G.

The Little Chronicle of Anna Magdalena Bach. Chatto and Windus.

6s.

Anna Magdalena Bach must be getting quite an old lady now; she was twenty-one when Johann Sebastian made her his second wife in December, 1721. Her advanced age is probably accountable for some of the little slips she makes in this charming volume. She is shaky on some points of German. Marpurg she calls "Marspurg." Arnstadt is given half a dozen times as "Arnstädt." She is a little groggy in her Italian ("viola de pompos"), and not quite clear as to the meanings of clavier, clavecin, and clavichord. Presumably she learned English late in life: this would account for such slips as "cans't," "little guessing of he to whom they were to lead me," "a composer he admired, and whom, I felt, might perhaps have taken a little trouble on his side," and "thou sittest there and sews"; as

also, perhaps, for the translation of "Bebung" (the clavichord effect) as "the power of sustaining the tone," &c. (She seems, indeed, actually to have consulted the note on "Bebung" in Grove, but to have misunderstood it slightly.) She has no doubt that the "St. Luke" Passion and the song "Willst du dein Herz mir schenken" are by Sebastian: perhaps she has not kept pace with the Bach research of recent years. And, most curious slip of all, she is a year out in the date of her husband's birth.

In spite of errors of this kind, however, and of its occasional odd mixture of the antique and the modern style, the anonymous author of this book (one suspects from internal evidence that it is a woman) has produced a delightful and sometimes quaintly pathetic piece of work. Virtually everything that we know about Bach is here told us in the guise of a biography of him by Anna Magdalena. The intimacy of the form is justified in the result: Bach, in these pages, seems near enough to us to see and touch. Anna Magdalena's love can see no fault in her idol except an occasional touch of temper. Even that, however, was reserved for outsiders. Sebastian's house must have been a noisy one with all those children about; and it is gratifying to have Anna's assurance that the great man never even slapped one of them.

E. N.

Wilhelm Speyer, der Liederkomponist. With 47 illustrations. By Edward Speyer (his youngest son). Drei Masken Verlag. 15s. net.

This book may be confidently commended to anyone who is interested in the musical personalities of Germany, France and to some extent England of the first half of the nineteenth century; and for any who do not read German with ease, it may be added that it is in Roman characters and is extraordinarily clearly printed. The bulk of it is made up of letters, and of these the majority are to and from Ludwig Spohr, that delightful egoist with an unfailing sense of humour. Other correspondence is with Meyerbeer, Liszt, Hauptmann, Zuccalmaglio, Berlioz and Schindler. There is a characteristic remark of Rossini that he could not compose any more operas because he was too good to write Italian music, that if he wrote French it could only be country dances and that German was too much for him. Moscheles has the preposterous idea of putting up a gigantic statue of Beethoven on the Siebengebirge—as if size had anything to do with it. These letters are linked up by short and useful summaries of what is known, and a good deal that is not common property, about the writers. Wilhelm Speyer was one of those people who go about doing good by having a genius for friendship.

Luis Milan and the Vihuelistas. By J. B. Trend. Oxford University Press, Humphrey Milford. 6s. net.

This forms one of the series of clear compact and not inelegant "Hispanic Notes and Monographs" issued by the Hispanic Society of America. The subject is the rather slender figure of a poet and lutenist at the Court of Valencia in the sixteenth century. A slender

figure, but an approved musician, to whom, as Mr. Trend tells us, a contemporary wrote in verse that he "must never make verses any more; his task was to play, for he could do that better than any man living." About him, the author has gathered and grouped carefully a considerable quantity of matter, interesting not only to the musician, but also to the sociologist. The music written for Milan's instrument may, we are reminded, by a transposition and the altering of one string, be playable on the modern guitar—perhaps more readily than Mr. Trend's fairly numerous quotations in Spanish and Portuguese will in all cases be understood by his readers. Nine musical examples, on the modern stave, five of them Milan's own compositions, are very clearly presented in an appendix, together with a full index, making the little book a useful survey of the subject.

W. M. M.

The Psychology of a Musical Prodigy. By G. Révész. Kegan Paul.
8s. 6d.

The primary interest of the book is psychological, not artistic, with a fundamental difference in the outlook. The author, who is the director of the Psychological Laboratory at Amsterdam, suffers from the handicap that the "extraordinarily gifted" child whose development he was able to watch from his sixth to his twelfth years was, for reasons not stated, suddenly withdrawn from his observation, so that of his further evolution he knows nothing. Nor, in fact, do we. The prodigy, Erwin Nyiregyhazi, of Hungarian parents is now twenty-two, and lives, we are told, in America. Unless this boy proves to be the musical genius that his early years promised, it would seem that the *Psychology of a Musical Prodigy* has been written in vain. The author accordingly insists that the young Erwin was by no means extraordinarily precocious, although in some respects, according to certain scientific tests, a year and a half or two in advance of his contemporaries. Yet in the chapter "Erwin's Mental Capacity," in which Mr. Révész is at great pains to prove that Erwin was not precocious, judgments are made by this child of 7 or 10 which would not disgrace a grown-up person of not a little critical acumen. We can only come to the conclusion that the young Erwin was in these matters at least extraordinarily and—I may add—depressingly precocious. What are we to think of a child of that age delivering himself thus:

"Grieg is a monotonous, sonorous composer, he expresses gloomy emotions; this is the effect of the North. He has written several wonderfully fine pieces, with very beautiful harmonies, which however recur too often. He was not able to picture feelings in all his compositions; namely, wherever he is monotonous, he is also lacking in emotion."

And so on about Bach, Wagner, Schumann, Puccini and Mascagni. Or again about Brahms, who, says Erwin, "was not a romantic, as is generally supposed, but a classical composer although not an old classical but a new classical one." Utterances such as these prove how easily psychological observers can be misled by the fact that the object of their investigation feels he is being observed, and if the "patient"

lends himself with complacency to the process as this child evidently did, by the author's own confession, he falls a prey all the more easily to unconscious suggestions which emanate from his environment and even from the observer himself.

L. D. G.

The Physical Basis of Piano Touch and Tone. By Otto Ortmann. Kegan Paul, Trench Trubner & Co., Ltd.

We are fond of chaffing the Americans about their affection for statistical and scientific data. Mr. Otto Ortmann, who is a member of the Psychological Laboratory of the Peabody Conservatory of Music, conforms to type and his book is full of tables, figures, graphs, charts, lettered curves, and even algebraical formulas. Yet we should be wrong indeed to ridicule his methods on the plea that art and science have nothing more than a common basis. We owe him instead a debt of gratitude for dispelling the more or less sentimental beliefs which still cling to the question of touch on the piano. Many years ago Madam Marie Jaell wrote a book on the influence in this respect of the papille of the finger tips, and teachers are to be found who firmly believe that a kind of vibratory message of the depressed key is the source of nameless beauty of tone. Mr. Ortmann examines first the key-depression itself, then its effect upon the hammer stroke, finally the action of the hammers on the string and of the string on the sounding board. Having completed the circle, he adds a most illuminating chapter on tone combinations (the previous ones having been concerned with the single tone) and on the noise element, which is, perhaps, the most debatable of the book. I am inclined to think that he gives too much importance to such factors in tone production as the noise of the various impacts: finger upon key, hammer upon string, key upon keyboard, and friction noises of the action. He arrives at this conclusion:—

"What we actually do then when playing the piano is to produce sounds of various pitch intensity and duration. Nothing more. Certain forms of touch are effective only because they enable us to secure a proper relationship among these variables. The quality of a sound on the piano depends upon its intensity; any one degree of intensity produces but one quality, and no two degrees of intensity can produce exactly the same quality. If A plays poetically and B does not, then as far as the single tone is concerned, A plays sounds of different intensity from those of B, and if B could play sounds of the same intensity as A, B would play just as poetically as A."

L. D. G.

The Musical Pilgrim. Edited by Dr. Arthur Somervell. Beethoven: Pianoforte Sonatas 1; Bach's Keyboard Suites, "48" Wohltemperierte Klavier (1 & 2) B Minor Mass; Wagner's Master-singers; Debussy & Ravel. 1s. 6d. each. Oxford University Press. Dr. Arthur Somervell has been fortunate in the choice of his authors.

Whether their names alone, associated with the study of specific subjects, such as those of Dr. Terry (B minor Mass) or J. Fuller Maitland (the "48"), warrant the thorough knowledge required for such a task, or whether less widely-known writers were entrusted with the work, they all express themselves clearly, sometimes elegantly, always readably. That they are all largely concerned with the effects of harmony is only natural, and F. H. Shera, for example, opens his little book on Debussy and Ravel with a scholarly and remarkably concise introduction on modern harmony and ancient modes. It is gratifying to find throughout these books structural details which I think are of greater interest and value both to the student and the amateur than harmonic analyses. Changes of key cannot escape even the most casual player or listener, but it is more interesting to penetrate the *arcana* of structure, of theme transformation, of contrapuntal fitnesses which as a rule attract the attention only of the initiated. (A good example occurs on page 55, where the author, Forbes-Milne, calls attention to a "counter-melody" in the finale of the *Appassionata*, bar 220, which is in effect a counterpoint in augmentation to a group of four semi-quavers). In Wagner's *Master-Singers*, Cyril Winn has given us some excellent work, but I should have liked more reference to the orchestration, an attractive subject always, whether to professionals or amateurs.

Nothing could be more informing and in their way complete than Dr. Terry's study on the B minor Mass and J. Fuller Maitland's *Suites and Partitas*, and the "48," with an interesting and lucid exposition of the "Equal Temperament" question as an introduction to the latter work, in which he steers clear of the time-honoured fallacy that Bach was the "inventor" of the system of equal temperament.

L. D. G.

Music and Boyhood. By Thomas Wood. Oxford University Press.

3s. 6d.

"The value of music in a school," says Dr. Wood in his opening chapter, "can best be gauged by its influence on 'these sixty per cents,'" this being his ascertained residue of boys in a preparatory school who, not being tone-deaf, neither acclaim nor decry things musical. These are the main flock, whose feeding is so difficult—and so interesting. The rest can be fairly well trusted to find their own ways to the best of the pasturage. The shepherding of the main flock through choir, chapel-service, concerts, and clubs is Dr. Wood's subject, with which he deals familiarly and practically. His sense of boyhood is so evidently keen that the optimism implicit in his chapter on the "Cultivation of Good Taste" is almost shared by a distrustful reader. The points throughout are not too readily presented, but they are well worth the picking out for those whose job it is to bring boys and music together.

W. M. M.

Plain Words on Singing. By William Shakespeare. Putnam. 5s.

This interesting book should be widely read by all who consider singing to be a serious part of music. The preface states that "Technical studies, after all, merely consist of certain exercises calculated to remove the obstacles that lie betwixt conception and execution." With respect, we beg to differ. This view implies that a pupil's musical sense is already fully developed, and that all he wants is mastery of the tools in his tool bag, and perhaps the acquisition of some new ones. But we cannot help feeling that technical accomplishment goes further, in that it actually shows us new musical points we should otherwise not have grasped, things not dreamt of in our philosophy. It is a curious thing that absolute mastery of material leads artists of great intelligence into new realms; were it not so, they would remain turning out faultless productions of the same type. As it is, a Rodin, a Sargent, a Verdi continually broaden their horizon and change their type. Mr. Shakespeare laments, at the end of the volume, that if a singer of the Porpora period came to life he would not find anything in modern music worthy of his technique. It is therefore clearly the business of those interested in technique to find the right means for singers to conquer modern difficulties, to make technique carry us on to the discovery that modern music is as singable as ancient music; to do for Vaughan Williams, Holst, Schönberg, and others what Jean de Reszke did for Wagner.

Perhaps the fact is that we make our intellectual prejudices conform to our technique. We cannot perform Scarlatti or Couperin cleanly, so we prefer something where a few wrong notes will matter less. If we can't conduct a tidy and neat allargando or rubato, we say we prefer strict time. So if we cannot manage modern songs we call them "un-singable." If we might apply a phrase from the judgments of Lord Birkenhead, we should say "There was a song which we did not, in point of fact, sing," parallel to the "irresistible temptation," which we do not, in point of fact, resist. It is for the modern teacher —no disrespect to Mr. Shakespeare—to show us how to sing the un-singable.

S. W.

Folk Songs from the South. By John Harrington Cox. Harvard University Press. 25s. net.

This collection of some 180 songs and ballads represents a part of the work done by members of the West Virginia Folk-lore Society during the last ten years. Much material is still unpublished. Besides the older ballads, which are all, or nearly all, to be found also in Campbell and Sharp's *English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachians*, there are modern ballads, folk songs in the making, on such subjects as railway catastrophes, lurid confessions of noted criminals, and the curious feuds, which remind one of Mark Twain's "Darnell v. Watson" in his "Life on the Mississippi." There are some half-dozen or more songs which seem to have no business in the book, such as "The Dying Californian" and "Just before the battle, Mother." Surely there can be no ground for calling these folk songs? Twenty-

nine tunes are given—most of them later forms of the corresponding tunes in Campbell and Sharp. Pictures of the singers are included in the book; they bring to mind some very different pictures of singers from whom we first heard "Henry Martin" or "Lord Bateman"—the velveteen-clad keeper, the old woman with her smooth grey hair and her "chenille net." The faces are as far apart as they well can be, but the songs are the same.

L. W. E.

REGISTER OF BOOKS ON MUSIC

THE following list contains a selection of the books on music that have been published since the compilation of the list printed in the last number of *MUSIC AND LETTERS*. The place of publication has not been added to the publisher's name if the former is the capital of the country or the latter is very well known. All prices quoted are net. In the case of foreign books the price mentioned is that at which the cheapest edition can be purchased in the country in which the book is published. At the present rates of exchange £1 is roughly equivalent to 50 French francs (fr.); to 20 German marks (M.); and to 120 Italian lire (L.).

Aesthetics. Schmitz, E.: *Musikh-aesthetik*. [2nd printing.] pp. xvi. 217. Breitkopf. 5 M.

Bach. Anon.: *The Little Chronicle of Magdalena Bach*. pp. 183. Chatto and Windus. 6/-.

Fuller-Maitland, J. A.: *The "48."* Bach's Wohltemperirtes Clavier. 8 vol. Milford. 1/6 each. ("The Musical Pilgrim.")

Fuller-Maitland, J. A.: *The Keyboard Suites of J. S. Bach*. pp. 74. Milford. 1/6. ("The Musical Pilgrim.")

Terry, C. S.: *Bach. The Mass in B minor*. pp. 47. Milford, 1924 [1925]. 1/6. ("The Musical Pilgrim.")

Beethoven. Cassirer, F.: *Beethoven und die Gestalt*. pp. 258. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt: Stuttgart. 19 M.

Mies, P.: *Die Bedeutung der Skizzen Beethovens zur Erkenntnis seines Stiles* pp. v. 178. Breitkopf. 4 M.

Milne, A. F.: *Beethoven. I. The Pianoforte Sonatas*. Milford. [1/6. ("The Musical Pilgrim.")

"Die Musik," March, 1925. [Special Beethoven number.] Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt: Stuttgart. 1 M. 50.

Peters, I.: *Beethoven's Klaviermusik*. pp. 140. C. P. Vieweg: Berlin. 9 M. 75.

Schenker, H.: *Ludwig van Beethoven: ix. Sinfonie*. [Musical analysis, with directions for performance and references to the literature on the symphony.] Universal-Ed.: Vienna. 8 M.

Wetzel, J. H.: *Beethoven's Violinsonaten nebst den Romanzen und dem Konzert, analysiert*. Bd. 1. [Sonatas 1-5 and the 2 Romances.] pp. ix. 402. M. Hesse: Berlin. 5 M. 50.

Bibliography. Subject Index to Periodicals, 1921. Section H. Music. pp. 18. Grafton. 2/6.

Biography. Grew, S.: *Makers of Music: The story of singers and instrumentalists*. pp. 365. illus. G. T. Foulis. 6/-.

Bizet. Pigot, C.: *Georges Bizet et son œuvre*. pp. 300. illus. Delagrave

Bruckner. A. Bruckner: *Gesammelte Briefe*. [Ed. by F. Gräflinger and M. Auer.] 2 vol. illus. G. Bosse: Regensburg. 6 M. 50.

Busoni. Wassermann, J.: *In memoriam Ferruccio Busoni*. [With facs.] pp. 30. S. Fischer: Berlin. 8 M.

Chopin. Ganche, E.: *Dans le souvenir de Frederic Chopin*. [With unpublished documents and illus.] pp. 252. "Mercure de France." 15 fr.

Strachey, M.: *The Nightingale*. A life of Chopin [in the form of fiction]. pp. 315. Longmans. 7/6.

Counterpoint. Bernardi, G. G.: *Contrapunto*. [2nd ed., enlarged.] pp. xviii. 362. Hoepli: Milan. 17 L. 50. ("Manuel Hoepli.")

Criticism. Newman, E.: *A Musical Critic's Holiday*. pp. xi. 307. Cassell. 12/6.

Debussy. Shera, F. H.: *Debussy and Ravel*. Milford. 1/6. ("The Musical Pilgrim.")

Dictionaries. Bremer, F.: *Handlexikon der Musik*. [Ed. by B. Schrader. 5th ed.] pp. 549. Reclam. 1 M. 80. (Reclam's Universal-Bibliothek Nos. 1681-1686.)

La Laurencie, L. de, ed.: *Encyclopédie de la musique*. Pt. 2. Technique, esthétique, pédagogie, vol. 1. pp. 760. Delagrave. 60 fr. (Pt. 1, 5 vols. on the history of music, has already been published.)

English Music. Flood, W. H. G.: *Early Tudor Composers*. [1485-1555.] pp. 181. Milford. 6/-. ("Oxford Musical Essays.")

Holbrooke, J.: *Contemporary British Composers*. pp. xii. 324. ports. Cecil Palmer. 15/-.

Eurhythmics. Pennington, J.: *The Importance of being Rhythmic*. A study of the principles of Dalcroze eurhythmics. Intro. by W. Damrosch. pp. 153. Putnam. 7/6.

Folk-Song. Barbeau, M. and Sapir, E.: *Folk Songs of French Canada*. pp. xxii, 216. Yale University Press: Newhaven; Milford: London. 18/6.

Cox, J. H., ed.: *Folk-Songs of the South*. Collected under the auspices of the West Virginia Folk-Lore Society. pp. xxxi, 545. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, Mass.; Milford: London. 25/-.

German Music. Fischer, J. L. and Lade, L. ed.: *Deutsche Musikpflege*. pp. vi, 192. Bühnenvolksbund: Frankfurt. 7 M. 50.

Scherwatzky, R.: *Geschichte der deutschen Musik bis Joh. Seb. Bach.—Geschichte der deutschen Musik seit Joh. Seb. Bach*. 3 pt. Quelle and Meyer: Leipzig. Together, about 2 M.

Gibbons, Fellowes, E. H.: *Orlando Gibbons*. A short account of his life and work. pp. 117. Clarendon Press. 7/6.

Handel. Flower, N.: *Georg Friedrich Händel*. [Germ. trans. by A. Klengel. With additional illus.] pp. xi, 324. K. F. Koehler: Leipzig. 12 M.

Hauk, Minnie. *Memories of a Singer*. Ed. by Capt. E. B. Hitchcock. pp. 295. illus. A. M. Philpot. 15/-.

History. Wolf, J.: *Geschichte der Musik in allgemeinverständlicher Form*. Tl. 1 [to 1600]. pp. 159. Quelle and Meyer: Leipzig. 1 M. 60.

Lalo, Servières, G.: *Edouard Lalo*. pp. 128. illus. H. Laurens. ("Les Musiciens célèbres.")

Melody. Hoffmann, E.: *Das Wesen der Melodie*. Tl. 1. pp. xvi, 225. M. Hesse: Berlin. 9 M.

Mozart. Prod'homme, J. G.: *Mozart, sa vie et ses œuvres*. [An adaptation of the German biography by Dr. A. Schurig.] pp. 464. Delagrave. 15 fr.

Musical Profession. Martin, W.: *The Conditions of Life and Work of Musicians*. 2 vol. League of Nations: Geneva; Constable: London.

Nikisch. Pöhl, F.: *Arthur Nikisch*. [Revised ed.] pp. 196. Alster-Verlag: Hamburg. 6 M.

Opera. Prod'homme, J. G.: *L'Opéra* [the Paris Opera]. 1869-1925. Delagrave. 7 fr.

Streatfield, R. A.: *The Opera*. 5th ed., revised by E. J. Dent. pp. xx, 402. Routledge. 8/6.

Orchestration. Carse, A.: *The History of Orchestration*. pp. 362. Kegan Paul. 12/6.

Oriental Music. Farmer, H. G.: *The Arabian Influence on Musical Theory*. pp. 22. H. Reeves. 2/6.

Schlesinger, K.: *Is European Musical Theory Indebted to the Arabs?* [A reply to the paper by H. G. Farmer.] pp. 16. H. Reeves. 2/6.

Piano. Ortmann, O.: *The Physical Basis of Piano Touch and Tone*. pp. xli, 188. Kegan Paul. 12/6.

Psychology. Elster, A.: *Musik und Erotik*. Betrachtungen zur Sexualsoziologie der Musik. pp. 58. A. Marcus & E. Weber: Bonn. 2 M.

Puccini. Fraccaroli, A.: *La Vita di Giacomo Puccini*. illus. Ricordi.

Ravel. Maurice Ravel. [Special No. of "La Revue Musicale" for April.] pp. 116. illus. 10 fr.

Shera, F. H.: *Debussy and Ravel*. See *Debussy*.

Russian Music. *Russia*. [Special number of "Musikblätter des Anbruch" for March.] Universal Ed.: Vienna. 1 M.

Schönberg. Wellesz, E.: *Arnold Schönberg*. Trans. by W. H. Kerridge. pp. vii, 59. Dent. 6/-.

School Music. Glover, C. H.: *The Term's Music*. pp. 184. Kegan Paul. 4s. 6d. ("The Musician's Bookshelf.")

Schütz. Spitta, F.: *Heinrich Schütz, ein Meister der musica sacra*. [Reprinted from "Neue Christoterpe."] pp. 35. C. E. Müller: Halle. 2 M.

Spanish Music. Trend, J. B.: *Luis Milan and the Vilhuolists*. Milford. 6/-. ("Hispanic Notes and Monographs.")

Suite. Blume, F.: *Studien zur Vorgeschichte der Orchestersuite im 15 und 16. Jahrhundert*. pp. v, 151. iv, 58. Kistner: Leipzig. 8 M.

Violin. Bachmann, A.: *An Encyclopedic of the Violin*. Trans. by F. H. Martens. Ed. by A. E. Wier. pp. xiv, 470. Illus. Appleton: New York and London.

Grünberg, M.: *Meister der Violine*. pp. 257. Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt: Stuttgart. 6 M.

Hedges, S. G.: *Self-Help for the Violinist*. pp. 180. "The Strad." 8/6.

Trendelenburg, W.: *Die Natürlichen Grundlagen der Kunst des Streichinstrumentenspiels*. pp. xix, 300. J. Springer: Berlin. 16 M. 50.

Violoncello. Waalewaki, W. J. von: *Das Violoncell und seine Geschichte*. [3rd ed., enlarged, by W. von Waalewaki.] pp. vi, 289. Breitkopf. 6 M.

Voice. Witherspoon, H.: *Singing*. A treatise for teachers and students. pp. 126. Schirmer: New York.

Wagner. EIGHT, G. A.: *Richard Wagner*. A critical biography. 2 vol. Arrowsmith. 52/6.

Lorenz, A.: *Das Geheimnis der Form bei Richard Wagner*. Bd. 1. Der musikalische Aufbau des Bühnenfestspiels der Ring der Nibelungen. pp. x. 320. M. Hesse: Berlin. 9 M.

Rabich, F.: *Richard Wagner und die Zeit*. pp. 88. H. Beyer & Söhne: Lügensalga. ("Musikalisches Magazin." Heft 71.) 1 M. 50.

Winn, C.: *The Mastersingers of Wagner*. Milford. 1/6. ("The Musical Pilgrim.")

Wolf, Werner, H.: *Hugo Wolf in Perchtoldsdorf*. [Reminiscences by the author, with letters of Wolf to various friends.] pp. 148. Illus. G. Bosse: Regensberg. 2 M.

NEW REPRODUCTIONS

These lists are representative only, not complete. To the "H.M.V." and "Col." which were in the April issue, is now added "Voc," the Vocalion Company.

GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

APRIL-JUNE, 1925

Bach. Concerto, D mi. P. and strings. Col. 3 records. (H. Cohen and Orch. Sir H. Wood.)

Violoncello Suite in G ma. H.M.V. D.B. 764. (Suggia.)

Beethoven. Quartet, C sharp mi. Op. 131. Voc. K. 05138-41. (L.S. Quartet.)

Berlioz. Symphonie Fantastique. H.M.V. D. 987-992. (Orch. Concerts Pas-de-loup.)

Bochcarini. 2 Vns. and Pf. 2nd movt. Voc. K. 05142. (J. d'Aranyi and A. Fachirri.)

Brahms. Clar. Sonata. Op. 120. No. 1. Voc. X. 9463, 4 and K. 05117. L. Tertis (viola) and E. Hobday.

Akademische Fest Overture. Col. 1 record. (Hallé Orch.)

Bruch. "Kol Nidrei." Col. 1 record. (Pablo Casals.)

Elgar. Enigma Variations. Col. 4 records. (N.Q.H.O.)

Grainger. Mock Morris. Voc. X. 9516. (Aeol. Orch.)

Handel. Vn. Son. in A. Voc. K. 05155. (A. Sammons and E. Hobday.)

Haydn. Oxford Symph. (No. 16.) Voc. K. 05125-7. (Aeol. Orch.)

Emperor quartet. C ma. Col. 3 records. (L.S.Q.)

F ma. quartet. Col. 2 records. (L.S.Q.)

Quartet, D ma. Op. 64. No. 5. Voc. X. 9554-6. (Spencer - Dyke quartet.)

Kelly. F. S. Jig from Suite for Flute and Pf. Voc. R. 0141. (J. d'Aranyi and E. Hobday.)

Joachim. Romance. Voc. K. 05118. (J. d'Aranyi and E. Hobday.)

Martini. Vn. Sonata, D ma. Voc. X. 9525. (J. d'Aranyi.)

Mendelssohn. Symphony No. 4. (Italian.) Voc. K. 05148-50. (Aeol. Orch.) Pf. Conc. No. 1 in G mi. Op. 25. H.M.V. D. 969-971. (Moiseiwitsch and Roy. Alb. Hall Orch.)

Mozart. Symphony, G mi. Voc. K. 05105, 6, 12, 13. (Aeol. Orch.)

Vn. Conc. No. 4 in D. H.M.V. D.B. 722-725. (Kreisler and Roy. Alb. Hall Orch.)

Pugnani. Sonata for 2 Vns. and Pf. Voc. K. 05110 and 05142. (J. d'Aranyi and A. Fachirri.)

Schubert. Impromptu B flat. H.M.V. D.B. 838. (Paderewski.)

Strauss. Tod und Verklärung. Col. 8 records. (Phil. Orch.)

Veracini. Vn. Sonata, E mi. H.M.V. D.B. 801. (Thibaud.)

Wagner. Lohengrin. Introd. to Act 3 and Wedding Procession.

Siegfried Idyll. Voc. K. 05157, 8. (Mod. Chamb. Orch.)

Götterdämmerung/Siegfried's journey. Col. 1 record. (Phil. Orch.)

PLAYER-PIANO ROLLS

Bach. Organ Prelude in F minor. Hupfeld Animatic 59000. The work in 3-4 time, steady semiquaver movement. Moderately easy to perform for player-pianists familiar with the Bach idiom.

Beethoven. Sonata in A, Op. 101. Welte-Mignon (Steinway and Sons) 2972 and 2973. Played by d'Albert.

Berger, Rodolphe. *Loin du Pays (Valse triste).* Animatic 52843. An easy gipsy waltz, of sentimental tone, and with a lightly animated middle section.

Brahms. 7 Fantasien, Op. 116: No. 3, Intermezzo in E minor, Aeolian Co. T. 24548. Of beautiful rhythmical construction, and not involved.

Chopin. 3 Nouvelles Etudes: No. 1 in F minor. A. Co. T. 24629. The piece of which one part moves by three equal notes against the four equal notes of the other part.

Debussy. *La Soirée dans Grenade.* Welte-Mignon 1450. Perhaps the most famous, as it is probably the loveliest, piece built up on the rhythm of the habanera: played by Ernst Schelling in the true spirit of an Andalusian nocturne.

Dohnanyi, E. von. Capriccio, Op. 2, No. 4 (played by Raymond Wilson, an American pianist not hitherto known in this country). A. Co. Duo-Art 6703. A rather difficult piece for the player-pianist on the foot-blown Duo-Art reproducing piano, because of the Brahms-like rhythm in several places.

Glazounow. Miniature, Op. 42, No. 2 (played by Frederic Lamond). Duo-Art 0225. A bright entertaining trifle.

Grieg. Schmetterling (*Butterfly*), Op. 43, No. 1 (played by the composer). Welte-Mignon 1275.

NOTE.—All these rolls play on all standard 88-note players, except those named "Duo-Art," which play only on the Aeolian Company's reproducing player-piano. Those named "Welte-Mignon" play also on the Welte reproducing player-piano, which the others will not.

S.G.

Moszkowski. Waltz, Op. 34, No. 1. A. Co. A. 777. An earnest composition of the concert-walts order.

Moszkowski. Minuet, Op. 37, in G (played by Josef Lhevinne). Welte-Mignon 2435. Of that stately movement proper to the "classical" type of minuet.

Moussorgski. Tableaux d'une exposition. Animatic 58875 (a) and (b). A famous set of pieces for piano, known to concert-goers by the orchestral versions of Sir Henry Wood, Ravel, etc. Not likely to be intelligible to amateurs who cannot examine the printed music in order to discover the time.

Nevin. Canzone Amorosa (played by Yolande Mero). Welte-Mignon 2584. A pleasant piece of naturally melodious music.

Sauer, Emile. Boite - à - musique (played by the composer). Duo-Art 0224.

Schubert. Impromptu in A flat, Op. 90, No. 4 (played by Arthur Schnabel). Welte-Mignon 583.

Schumann. Toccata in C, Op. 7 (played by Harold Bauer). Duo-Art 6496. A swift moto perpetuo, moving by groups of 4-semiquavers. Difficult.

Schumann-Liszt. Widmung (Dedication). A. Co. A. 779. One of the Schumann songs transcribed by Liszt for concert use.

Stravinski. Etude pour "Pianola." A. Co. T. 967. Specially composed at the request of the Aeolian Company, the object being to provide a piece of music which shall be peculiarly appropriate to the player-piano. The music is naturally very modern, and it will be all a muddle to player-pianists who do not know the time, but it will be fascinating to musicians who can locate the bars and thence the rhythm.

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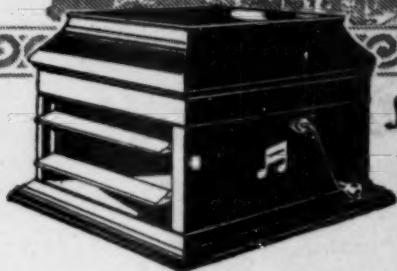
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The Ear	By a Doctor of Medicine
Musical Proverbis at Lekingfelde Lodge	F. W. Galpin
The Eschequier Virginal	W. H. Grattan Flood
Old English Harmony	Dom Anselm Hughes, O.S.B.
The Claims of Tonic Solfa	S. Whybrow; T. H. Yorke Trotter; W. G. Whittaker
Schubert	I. Gurney
The Leit-Motif Since Wagner	G. E. H. Abraham
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